EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR TRAINING PARENTS IN

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

—————————————

A Prospectus

Presented to

the Faculty of

the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

—————————————

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

—————————————

by

Wesley Ryan Steenburg

August 30, 2010

APPROVAL SHEET

CHURCH AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

Wesley Ryan Steenburg

Read and Approved by:

_____
Timothy Paul Jones (Chairperson)

_____
Hal Kenton Pettegrew

Date _____

To Kristen

My Joy

My Crown

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NSYR   National Study of Youth and Religion

VFM   Vision Forum Ministries

ACFR   Alliance for Church and Family Reformation

NCFIC   National Center for Family Integrated Churches

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE

This research began with a big salad and an ice-cold Pibb. In the summer of
2008, while taking a class on relationships in the church, I asked my professor out on a
date. Never could I have imagined that the lunch date would have been the starting point
of what lies in the pages that follow. Never could I imagine that the Star Wars fanatic
professor and his family would become such dear friends to Kristen and our family.

Dr. Jones has been more than just an insightful instructor. In addition to being
a sounding board, he has been a guiding hand. Paul, in writing to the churches, often
commended Timothy and others that were working side-by-side for the sake of the
gospel. I have often felt like Paul's Timothy as Dr. Jones has opened door after door of
opportunity for me to serve and impact ministries for the sake of the gospel. Thank you,
Dr. Jones, for your friendship, trust, and continual encouragement. Thank you, too, for
developing the Family Perspectives and Practices survey which has already demonstrated
the state of our churches today, and will prayerfully bring reform to our churches and
families tomorrow. The use of the survey in this study will be invaluable to discovering
the best practices of the churches which are effectively transforming families for the sake
of the gospel.

I would be remiss if I failed to also acknowledge another friend that God has
brought into the lives of the Steenburg family. Dr. Pettegrew and his wife, Sharon, have
been a joy to spend time with, and an encouragement to our young marriage. Dr.
Pettegrew's insightful thoughts on the structure of this research and its methodology have

been instrumental in assuring that the research will get the answers to the questions. The design has progressed and improved through the relentless reading of Dr. Pettegrew and his greater understanding of how to best demonstrate the best practices of churches which are training parents for household family discipleship. Both of these men are more than spectators in the game of household family discipleship, they are active models of the underlying tenets necessary for multi-generational faithfulness.

I would like to thank Dr. Randy Stinson for his leadership in the School of Church Ministries and the sacrifices that role requires. I thank Dr. Brian Richardson for his undying commitment to the Word of God and how that is embedded in all of his classes through lecture and further through personal conversation. Dr. Michael Wilder has been a kind and caring individual from the day I interviewed for the program until now. Although a professor by name, he still has a pastor's heart.

The ink on this page will never be able to express the gratitude that I have for Kristen, my wife, and the help she has been on this amazing journey. She has sacrificed much to see the completion of this project. She has cared for her husband, our children, and our home. Her faithfulness to God and desire to honor and please Him, has made this process possible. My love for her continues to grow with each step we take together. How could such an undeserving man be so blessed?

Finally, I would like to thank Jim Baird for his encouraging words and relentless dedication to my work as a student and an upcoming author. And to his mother, who accepted my proposal, and chose to publish my work.

W. Ryan Steenburg
Louisville, Kentucky
May 2011

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH CONCERN

The present concern reaches past the pages of this research and into the essence of Christian practice in the context of the family. Parents appear to be delinquent at the task of discipling their children. This statement represents the crux about which many books have been written and ministry models established. Three models in particular claim to be in the process of realigning the efforts of the church in order to prepare parents for the household discipleship process. The concern, then, is which models of church ministry exhibit the best practical practices for churches to consider.

Introduction to the Research Problem

The question driving church leadership for the past century and a half has been, "what do we do with the youth?" According to Francis Edward Clark, founder of the Society for Christian Endeavor (1881) the youth must be "set at work for the Master at once" (Clark 1903, 11-12). The result was weekly meetings that were conducted by the youth, which formerly denied the involvement of the parents. According to Mark Senter, the influx of youth in the church during the baby boom era saw the rise of the position of youth minister (Senter 1992, 142). Although churches began to call youth ministers in the 1950's to work with the youth, it was not until the 1960's that the position became popular and well accepted (Jones 2009, 33).

With the rise in popularity of the youth ministry position has come an increase

in publications on how to do youth ministry. Aware of the epidemic confronting the church, scholars and theologians have struggled with the same question as they have published multiple volumes directing the youth minister on how to perform his duties. *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry* by Mike King, promotes a ministry style which seeks to establish the appropriate atmosphere where youth can experience genuine spiritual formation (King 2006, 11). King suggests this atmosphere will be defined by the relationships the youth worker has with the youth (King 2006, 69). Another text, *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus* by Mark Yaconelli, is a call for the youth worker to experience God for the sake of passing to the youth attentiveness to God (Yaconelli 2006, 25). Still another, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* by Mark DeVries, proposes a two-fold strategy to train the parents and the extended family of the church (DeVries 2004, 101-106). Texts such as these, and others, fill the shelves of pastoral libraries in churches of all denominations. These titles, as well as others, serve as an attempt to prepare and regulate the office of youth minister in an effort to reach the youth for Christ.

Another historical question to consider is, "who *should* be reaching the youth for Christ?" Samuel Dike, at the turn of the twentieth century, took strides to place the responsibility to reach the youth on the shoulders of the parents. It is only in recent decades that Dike's propositions have gained popularity in various forms almost completely detached from Dike himself. The proponents of this movement strive to get back to the basics of biblical instruction and seek to determine who should be the primary disciplers of the youth of the church, and how the church can support the efforts.

Certain congregations have taken a therapeutic approach to the family by

introducing care and counseling practices within the church in order to meet the needs of the individual family members. For these congregations, the remedy to the problem appears to exist in the mentality that if all members can be taught how to function within the greater whole, ministry is taking place. Although functioning under the appearance of a Christian ministry, these efforts often fail to include the gospel as the core of the ministry process and rely more heavily on self-actualizing tendencies.

For many, the concern for the youth is connected to the perceived crisis of youth leaving the church after leaving high school. This perceived crisis over the dropout rates has led to conclusions, publications, and programs that focus on the function and role of the church in the life of the youth. What appears to be missing, however, is the function and role of the church in the life of the family—specifically, the function and role of the church to train parents to fulfill their role as disciplers in the lives of their children. This research does not intend to demonstrate the next best church retention program. This research intends to discover what is being done for parents to fulfill their roles as primary disciplers, church retention aside.

The Primary Concern

The efforts to revive and reorganize the approach to youth and family ministry are commendable. A primary concern for family discipleship raised by scholars and theologians is that the family has failed to rise to the privilege and responsibility of passing the torch of faithfulness from one generation to the next. Considering why this might be, certain scholars have observed that the Christian family has been under attack and a victim of certain outcomes due to social trends, the women's movement, science, medicine, and the political movement (Barton 2001, 5-8). In the face of much confusion,

oppression, and distorted satisfaction with the church, certain parents have surrendered their rights to the industry of the local church.

Christian Smith, author of *Soul Searching,* concluded that the "single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents" (Smith and Denton 2005, 261). Jeff Astley also notes in *The Family in Theological Perspective,* that the family is the central means of faith formation and the passing of tradition (Astley 1996, 199). The same author raises the concern of *what* faith and *what* traditions are being passed from one generation to the next. He further promotes that the church, or in Astley's terms, *the wider community*, should be active in the Christian education of the home (Astley 1996, 201).

This will be explored more fully later, but it is the understanding of this research that from a theological perspective, the primary responsibility to disciple the children of the Christian home does not fall to the church or to a youth minister. According to certain passages of Scripture (ex., Deuteronomy 6:7, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4) the primary responsibility falls to the parents and to the father, in particular. The church culture of the past century or so, however, has slowly minimized the role of the parents as primary disciplers in the life of the child. The church has established programs for the various generations, systematically separating the children from their parents, and subtly communicating to the families that the church would provide adequate instruction to disciple their children (Jones 2009, 34).

A Case in Point

Steve Wright, author of *Apparent Privilege,* relates a story of a conversation he had with a gentleman named Frank. Frank and his wife faithfully took their children to

church, kept them all involved in the youth group and other church functions, only to see their adult children walk away from Christianity. No one can ensure another's salvation, no matter how faithful one is in their efforts. Frank's concern, however, was that he thought he was doing the right thing. Frank said of himself and his wife, "we believed that our job was to bring our boys to church" (Wright and Graves 2008, 13). Frank was devastated by the fact that no one had ever told him that the responsibility to disciple his children belonged to him and his wife (Wright and Graves 2008, 13).

Frank's claim of ignorance may just as well be placed on his shoulders as his church's shoulders. This case could also suggest that the programming offered by Frank's church was ineffective and ultimately detrimental to the lives of his children. It is not always this bad, and it would be unfair to lump every church with programs for youth and children into the same category as Frank's situation. Frank, however, is not an isolated case. According to a FamilyLife survey conducted between 2007 and 2008, more than half of parents in Christian homes in North America never or rarely engage in any family devotional time (Jones 2011, 12). According to a follow up study conducted by the Center for Christian Family Ministry, only 20% of Christian families had prayed, read Scripture, or engaged in family devotions at least once a week (Jones 2011, 13). With the time, energy, and finances that churches put into their children and youth programs, no wonder parents spend two decades thinking they are doing what they should for their children by taking them to such functions and nothing else.

This false satisfaction has come mostly in the form of churches ignoring the need that parents have to be taught how to disciple their children. For the most part, churches have not done an effective job of telling parents that they are to disciple their

children, let alone teaching parents how they are to disciple their children in the ways and means found in Scripture. The primary problem with family discipleship, according to Richard Land and Barrett Duke, stems from within the church. They write that a primary reason for the failure to raise up men as disciplers is due to the fact that churches have not taught their families about core family issues like fathering (Land and Duke 1999, 98).

This proposed research will significantly contribute to the present literature as a demonstration of what certain churches are doing to train the parents of their congregation for household family discipleship. It is not anticipated that this research will result in evaluating only those churches which have disbanded their youth ministry or the preceding preschool and children's ministries. It is anticipated, however, that this research will identify churches that both utilize the functions of the youth minister and other preceding ministries, as well as those churches who have disbanded such ministries.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this two-phase sequential mixed methods study will be to explore the best practices for training parents to pursue household family discipleship among churches identified as holding and conducting a family ministry philosophy and approach. This research will use quantitative methods to measure the parent's perception and practices, and qualitative methods to explore the best practices of the churches.

Delimitations of the Proposed Research

The research will be delimited to those churches espousing a family ministry approach as defined by the literature and the researcher. Because the expert panel will be comprised of conservative evangelical leaders, it is highly likely that all congregations nominated will be conservative evangelical by nature. If this is the case, the research will

most likely be delimited to conservative evangelical congregations. In addition, the Phase One research will be delimited to parents who are actively enrolled members of those churches. Parents, for the purpose of this study, will be defined as married couples (man and woman) who are living in the same residence, and have at least one child under the age of eighteen years and greater than the age of eighteen months living at the same home or residence as the parents.

This researcher in no way seeks to minimize the circumstances of certain households which find they do not meet the delimiting criteria above. This researcher has the highest regard for single parents who strive to bring their children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. It is also recognized that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other extended family members may be the sole providers for children living in their home. This researcher recognizes those who regularly practice household family discipleship with the children in that situation, but for the sake of maintaining a consistent sample in this particular research, these individuals have been excluded. For the sake of consistency, it will be necessary to adhere to the definition of parents provided by the researcher, and to delimit the research to only those parents to avoid any variances that may arise from alternative family structures.

Research Questions

1. To what degree, and in what ways, do parents perceive and practice family discipleship as a household parental responsibility?

2. In what ways have churches taught parents their responsibility to disciple their own children?

3. In what ways do churches train and support parents in the congregation to fulfill their role as primary disciplers?

4. In what ways do churches assess the effectiveness of training parents to disciple

their children?

Terminology

Family Discipleship: The process which takes place when parents guide their child(ren) through regular and intentional practices which focus on knowledge of Scripture, reverence for God, and obedience to Christ. "Discipleship involves developing perspectives and practices that reflect the mind of Christ, as revealed to us in the New Testament...conformity to Jesus Christ is the goal of discipleship; 'spiritual development' and 'Christian formation' describe progress towards this goal" (Jones 2011, 7).

Family ministry: "The process of intentionally and persistently realigning a congregations proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children" (Jones 2009, 40). Put another way, "Family ministry describes *how* a church partners with parents so that the Christian formation of children occurs not only at church but also in the household" (Nelson 2011). An alternative definition is, "communicating to people of all ages, in as many ways as possible, the biblical and practical truths related to family living" (Sell 1995, 137). Mark DeVries describes this type of family ministry as ambulance or guardrail programs, systems and programs implemented to support families where they are and not necessarily move them towards mature Christianity (DeVries 2001, 151). This is not how this research will view family ministry. The research will consider the former definition and not the latter.

Parents: For the purpose of this research "parents" will consist of a married couple, man and woman, who live in the same residence. According to Charles Sell, this is the ideal setting into which a child would be born (Sell 1995, 77-78). The purpose in

striving to delimit "parents" by this definition is for the purpose of maintaining consistency within the sample. Parents who are adoptive parents and otherwise meet the criteria above will be included in this research.

Family-Based: "Family-based churches retain separate, age-segmented ministry structures. …family based churches intentionally include intergenerational and family-focused events in each ministry" (Shields 2009, 100).

Family-Equipping: "Family-equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children" (Strother 2009, 144).

Family-Integrated: "The [family-integrated] church eliminates age-segregated programs and events. All or nearly all programs and events are multigenerational, with a strong focus on parents' responsibility to evangelize and to disciple their own children" (Jones 2009, 52).

Procedural Overview

In order to most effectively establish a sample population for this study, an expert panel will be assembled. The expert panel will be compiled of nine (9) individuals who have a significant voice within the evangelical world as it pertains to family ministry. Three (3) individuals will be familiar with the family-integrated model, three (3) will be familiar with the family-based model, and three (3) will be familiar with the family-equipping model. It is proposed that upon submission of the list of churches from the expert panel that all eligible parents from each congregation will be invited to take part in an online survey (Phase One). The survey, "The Family Discipleship Perceptions

and Practices Survey," will be hosted by an on-line data collection service and will

include an option to be entered into a drawing for one of three $50.00 gift cards. The

survey will consist of twenty-four (24) questions and should take no more than ten (10)

minutes to complete. The questions will be designed to identify the parents' perception of

their role and responsibility as well as gauge the household practices which the parents

are performing on a regular basis. The church's influence in the performance of such

practices will also be explored. In an effort to capture the perspectives and practices of

the parents as well as that of the church leadership, both will be examined.

Phase Two of the study will consist of phone or video interviews of all the

nominated churches about the overall ministry approach and the specific plan or process

in place to fulfill the family ministry objectives. Since the churches on the list have been

nominated by the expert panel, all of the churches should and will be interviewed about

their family ministry approach and practices. In addition, three churches will be selected

to participate in case studies. These churches will be indentified through purposive

sampling based upon the performance of the parents on the survey instrument. Each

survey participant will be asked to identify their church, and once the surveys are scored,

the churches with the highest score from each of the respective categories (family-based,

family-integrated, and family-equipping) will be invited to participate in a case study.

The case studies will include, but not be limited to, face-to-face interviews

with key pastoral staff, collecting data from the church website, requesting copies of the

events calendars, staff handbooks, curricula, job descriptions, and notes from business

meetings. On-site visits will enhance the understanding of the daily efforts given to

family ministry as well as providing opportunities to evaluate attitude and behavior of the

church staff and parents. Further data may be collected through phone or video

interviews conducted as necessary with the key leaders in the church and those involved

in the regular implementation of the family ministry objectives.

Research Assumptions

This study will operate under a variety of assumptions.

1. Parents and churches involved in the study understand Scripture to be the authoritative base for understanding the role and relationship of those two institutions (family and church) in the discipleship of children.

2. The churches which the expert panel identifies are in fact performing specific parent training practices that can be observed and explained to the researcher.

3. The parental perception of household discipleship practices and the performance of those practices are measures by which to identify churches which are training parents for their role as disciplers.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

It will be the task of this chapter to consider the perceived crisis within youth

and family ministry, examine some contemporary research which has led others to pursue

addressing the same concern as this research, and to define family ministry as it pertains

to the proposed research. Further, this chapter will explore the biblical and theological

foundations for family ministry and present the current models for family ministry.

Finally, this chapter will address the need for assessment of these models of family

ministry.

The Perceived Crisis

In 2002, Dennis Rainey, executive director of FamilyLife, wrote, "No church,

community, or nation will rise higher than the spiritual condition of its families" (Rainey

2002, 15). Although Rainey's words may not be grounded in any specific research, the

observation, nonetheless, makes a bold statement about the importance of the family in

the life of the culture and society. Scholars, theologians, and pastors alike have raised the

concern that families are not rising to the right, responsibility, or privilege of passing the

torch of faithfulness from one generation to the next. Certain scholars suggest this is a

result of the family suffering attack from certain societal trends as the women's

movement, science, medicine, and the political movement (Barton 2001, 5-8). Whatever

the cause may be, the concern is common across evangelical denominational lines, and

even stretches outside of evangelical Christianity into such religions as Mormonism (Smith and Denton 2005).

The church, in an apparent effort to reconcile the failing family and to build bridges through generational gaps, has instituted such programs as children and youth ministries. Many of these ministries can be found in churches as early as the eighteenth century (Steenburg 2010). Voddie Baucham points out in personal conversation that these programs and functions, which are often deemed "traditional," are, in fact, "neo-traditional." Baucham utilizes this term to suggest that these functions and programs are not as old as the church often considers them to be, but are in fact quite new to the framework of the church. These neo-traditional efforts have too often been focused on the youth, while not giving much consideration to the role and influence of the parents.

Christian Smith, author of *Soul Searching,* concludes in his book that the "single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents" (Smith and Denton 2005, 261). Jeff Astley further suggests in his book, *The Family in Theological Perspective,* that the family is the central means of faith formation and the passing of tradition (Astley 1996, 199). Astley also addresses the concern over *what* faith and *what* traditions are being passed from one generation to the next. Astley refers to the church as the wider community and further promotes that this community should be active in the Christian education of the home (Astley 1996, 201). Richard Land and Barrett Duke are not that far removed from what Jeff Astley is asserting when they suggest that the primary problem with family discipleship stems from within the church. Land and Duke propose that a primary reason for the failure to raise up men as disciplers is due to the fact that churches have not taught their families

about core family issues like fathering (Land and Duke 1999, 98).

According to a study performed by the Barna Group, only 20% of individuals in their twenties "have maintained a level of spiritual activity consistent with their high school experiences" (The Barna Group, 2006). Another study, performed by Lifeway Research, produced similar results when it concluded that 70% of individuals ages 23 to 30 had stopped attending church regularly for at least a year when they were ages 18 to 22 (Lifeway Reserach 2007). Although the same research demonstrates that 65% of those dropouts do eventually return to church, only 35% of them claim to attend church at least twice a month (LifeWay Research 2007). That is less than a quarter of the original attendees returning on at least a half time status.

In addition to these studies there has been a general concern raised by evangelical leaders as they consider the high dropout rate from their own congregations. In a report to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention just one week after the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, T.C. Pinckney stated that "research indicates that 70% of teens who are involved in a church youth group will stop attending church within two years of their high school graduation" (Pinckney 2001). Josh McDowell claims that over 69% of youth leave the church after high school (McDowell 2006, 13). George Barna claimed, in 2001, that only 33% of churched youth said that church will play a part in their lives when they leave home (Barna 2001, 136). And, unfortunately, even those youth who maintain an identity with the religious congregation in which they were raised, a great majority of them have unarticulated views about the beliefs of that congregation (Smith and Denton 2005, 260).

Although some of this research is unfounded and other research is admittedly

poor, the majority of the authors in the field of family ministry refer to this type of research when establishing the need for reform within the youth and family ministries of the church. It is only the elite authors who recommend setting this research aside and addressing the true concern of gospel-centered, parents pursuing household discipleship. It is apparent, based on this information alone, that the neo-traditional programs, activities, and operations of the church have not been proving effective for church retention, spiritual formation, or discipleship. With that thought in mind, then, what is proving effective? Are there specific practices that churches are performing which are proving effective in regards to spiritual formation of parents, or training for parent pursued household discipleship?

Although there are many other factors that may contribute to the failing of families and the lack of parents pursuing household discipleship, the church must consider its own contribution to the present dilemma before looking for any cause elsewhere. What will the contemporary church do in order to grow and develop fully devoted followers of Jesus the Messiah? How will the church engage the present generation as well as the generations to come with the call to go and make disciples? How will the paradigm of church change from what was once known? What kind of paradigm does the church need in order to develop faithfulness from generation to generation?

Family Ministry

The backdrop for many youth and children's programs today is the generic term, family ministry. Depending on the church, family ministry can take on a different meaning and a different look from one congregation to the next. Just a cursory

examination of various church web-sites will reveal that for most, the ministry to families exists through departments designed to target specific age or life-style categories. Many churches offer ministries for the children, students, singles, and married. Although no overarching family ministry is identified, every aspect of the family is identified. Family ministry, as it pertains to this research, will be "the process of intentionally and persistently realigning a congregation's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children" (Jones 2009, 40). This researcher believes that this definition best fits the biblical understanding of discipleship for children.

A Different Type of Family Ministry

As early as the nineteenth century, family-life programs were established as a response to the changing face of the family (Thomas, Schvaneveldt, and Young 1993). As society changed, so did the roles of the family members (Duncan and Goddard 2005, 3). Popularized in the 1950's and 1960's, family-life ministries took strides to bring healing to hurting families. These programs quickly became the standard in textbooks and institutions of higher learning. Textbook's such as *Family Ministry*, by Diana Garland, and *Family Ministry: The Enrichment of Family Life Through the Church* by Charles Sell, are examples of contemporary texts which address this form of family ministry. "While not disregarding parents' responsibility to disciple their children, Family-Life Education focused primarily on developing healthy family relationships" (Nelson, Jones 2011).

Beginning in the mid-1950s, churches, schools, and colleges began to develop counseling programs and instructional materials for those families who were in distress,

as well as preventative programs for other families to avoid distress (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, and Moss 1993, 3). The term "family life education" was popularized by the formation of many of these programs. The events and programs are typically designed in order to draw families together and to instruct them in how to interact, work, and live together (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, and Moss 1993, 14). Churches readily hired Family Life ministers, and some have even been known to rename their gymnasiums as "Family Life Centers."

Family life education is taught in universities, seminaries, and Christian colleges. Textbooks such as *Helping Families Through the Church: A Symposium on Family Life Education*, edited by Oscar Feucht, *Family Ministry: The Enrichment of Family Life through the Church*, by Charles Sell, and *Family Ministry,* by Diana Garland, have all contributed to this field. Family life education may focus on family formation within the church, counseling and support services, or family well being. Under this type of family ministry, some family ministry efforts might involve whole families, the family activities and events, however, tend to function separately from other church ministries (Jones 2010).

Oscar Feucht has been the voice for family life ministry since the 1950's. As the secretary for adult education for the Lutheran synod, Feucht had a significant influence in this particular field. Author of, and contributor to, numerous books, Feucht's "approach provided practical helps for developing programs to educate families for healthier relationships and to equip parents to train their children" (Nelson, Jones 2011).

Charles Sell's approaches are not much different. In his book, *Family Ministry*, Sell defines family ministry in this way, "Family ministry involves communicating to

people of all ages, in as many ways as possible, the biblical and practical truths related to family living" (Sell 1995, 137). Using this definition and the programs outlined in the chapters of his text, Sell presents family ministry as something that is conducted by the church for the benefit of the church (Sell 1995, 20, 71, 129). He later, however, promotes the church itself as a family-like institution opening the way for his position that the church and the home are to nurture the children of the church together (Sell 1995, 149-152).

Sell compartmentalizes the ministries of the church in an effort to reach every specific need of the representative families, in an effort to strengthen the church by strengthening the family (Sell 1995, 131). Sell strives to bring attention to the power which the church has to help the family (Sell 1995, 20). Although this effort is commendable and possibly helpful from a therapeutic perspective, this is not the family ministry being addressed by this research. This research seeks to explore family ministry from the perspective of the church "intentionally and persistently realigning a congregation's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children" (Jones 2009, 40).

Biblical Theological Foundations

The most fundamental expectations for the spiritual development of children are outlined in the Old Testament and extrapolated on throughout the New Testament. Deuteronomy 6:1-9 outlines not only what should be taught to the children of the promise (v. 5, "love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your might"), but also to what extent this teaching should be done (vv. 6-9, "…teach them

diligently… in your house…walk by the way…lie down…rise…bind them on your hand…frontlets between your eyes…write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates"). Proverbs 22:6 recognizes the fallen nature of human beings and gives hope to the outcome of the proper training a child should receive. And Paul, in Ephesians, admonishes fathers to train their children in the fear and instruction of the Lord in light of the redemptive power of the cross.

It is imperative to begin with the biblical foundations of family discipleship as outlined in Scripture as the basis for family ministry. With Scripture as the guide, this section will follow the pattern of *Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation.* Following the biblical metanarrative will help to see the greater picture of the purpose behind family ministry, and the hope that Scripture offers.

Creation

To discover that familial relationships and roles existed before the Fall of man carries with it a certain relief. Not the type of relief that satisfies the soul to salvation, but a relief that demonstrates God, through His sovereignty, has ordained and sustained the role of men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. Three key verses in the first chapter of Genesis reveal that God established these roles before the Fall. In Genesis 1:26 God declares that He is going to make man (אָדָם at this point is the generic term for mankind and will later become the proper name for Adam) in His image. And that man is to have dominion over the earth, over every living creature. Secondly, Genesis 1:27 goes on to read that man (אָדָם is still generic) is created male and female. And thirdly, Genesis 1:28 demonstrates the role which God has given to both male and

female mankind when He says for them to be fruitful and multiply and to have dominion over the living creatures. This final verse helps to not only establish the presence of the marital relationship, but even the purpose of the marital relationship. Before the Fall of man, God had established that man and woman were to function together in their dominion over the earth and were to be responsible for filling the earth.

The second account of creation, found in Genesis 2, reveals more on how these roles and relationships impact society today. After God had formed every beast of the field and bird of the air, it was determined that none of these creatures would be suitable helpers for Adam. According to this account of creation, it was at this point that God created woman out of Adam's rib, and Adam found her to be suitable – granted she was naked. The roles of man and woman are established here as God created woman as a helper for man, and not the other way around (Hammett 2007, 355-356).

The question has been asked by scholars, and the debate still rages today, "In what sense was she to be a helper?" John Sailhamer agrees with Augustine when he contends that based upon the blessing that Adam and Eve received in Genesis 1:28 (be fruitful and multiply), Eve was created a helper as it pertains to bearing children (Sailhamer 1990, 46), for this is something Adam could not do on his own. Sailhamer also points out that this position is further supported when one considers the events of the next chapter. Eve's judgment relates specifically to her role in bearing children (Gen 3:16), that she will do so with multiplied pain. Even with the preceding promise of the offspring (Gen 3:15) there is a wordplay on the woman's role as helper (Sailhamer 1990, 46).

Christians need to appreciate two aspects to the creation story. First, one must

consider the magnitude that *imago dei* carries in regards to families. All humans, being the offspring of Adam and Eve, are created in the image of God. This surpasses the roles of just husband and wife, and extends to the children that the husband and wife bear and rear. It is helpful, with this realization in mind, then, to consider that even children are created as image bearers of God. Secondly, as much as men and fathers are addressed to train their children (ex., Eph 6:4; Deut 6:1-9), mothers are called to play a significant helpers role. With the roles in mind, it is no wonder the biblical authors used masculine language; for the man is to lead out in the instruction and the woman to help him in that instruction.

Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians 4:2

Although an extra-biblical author, Polycarp is considered one of the most notable figures in the post-apostolic church (Holmes 1999, 202). Polycarp served as the bishop of Smyrna during the first century and eventually died a martyr's death. Because of his notability and presence in the first century, his letter can serve as a positive gauge of what life and livelihood would have looked like for the first century church. In his letter to the Philippians he addressed the role of women in the instruction of children. It should be noted that in his letter he addressed the husbands to "instruct [their] wives to continue in the faith delivered to them and in love and purity, cherishing their own husbands in all fidelity and loving all others equally in all chastity, and *to instruct the children with instruction that leads to the fear of God*" (Holmes 1999, 211 italics added). By examining this text, contemporary readers of Scripture can learn that as much as the command in Ephesians is to the father, the mother was just as involved in the instruction of children in the home of the first century church.

Fall of Man

The Fall brought more than just judgment to the earth and mankind, it also brought a distortion to the way God had originally designed them to be. Although one finds relief in the story of creation as it pertains to the roles and responsibilities of men and women, the introduction of sin into the world distorted the fulfillment of those roles and responsibilities. When Paul exhorts husbands to love their wives like Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25-33) he did so because as fallen beings men have a propensity to be selfish and not loving towards another. The same could be said for Paul's exhortation for fathers to not exasperate their children (Eph 6:4).

A number of ways exist in which a father may provoke his son or daughter to anger. The experience may come through the harshness of the father, as well as the absence of the father. The role that Paul appears to be addressing in Ephesians 6:4, is an established power role that exists between the father and his children (Lincoln 1990, 406). Paul recognizes the direct and indirect power that fathers have over their children, and for this very reason, emphasizes that fathers should be tender towards their children. For the child is, in fact, part of the father's own flesh. In the case of the husband and wife being one flesh (Eph 5:31) we have a mystery revealed in the matrimonial covenant; in the case of the father and child, we have an understood fact (Wood 1981, 81).

The idea of a father not usurping his power and authority is especially dynamic for Paul's day, considering that the role of the father in Greco-Roman culture was to have, and even wield, ultimate authority (Wood 1981, 81). In the Greco-Roman world, the father had ultimate power over his children (Tucker 1910, 315). This power of father over his children was so great that even after birth, if the father had any indication that the child was not suitable for life, he had, by Roman law (called *patria potestas*), the

right to end the child's life by drowning the infant or to abandon the infant for death (Tucker 1910, 317; see also Eyben 2004, 114-116). The father's power extended into adolescence and even adulthood, giving the father complete power over the offspring's life until the father had passed away. It does not seem evident that just by sheer allowance under the law that many fathers followed through with the law. The opposite would seem more likely.

Children should not necessarily be viewed as innocent either. Children are fallen beings, as well. The exhortation for children to obey their parents (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20) does not come without merit. As fallen beings, children, like their fathers, will have a propensity towards disobedience. Proverbs 22:6 suggests that a child trained correctly in life will do well in life, when he or she follows that training. The verse is not an option, but rather it is an imperative: for parents to train their children (Muck 2003, 517).

Most translations of this verse render this training in a positive sense. This gives the English reader a certain hope, not a promise, that when trained correctly, the child will adhere to the training and live a promising life (Harrison et al. 2005, 204-205). The message of the verse, when analyzed further in the Hebrew, can just as equally render the idea that a child who is allowed to create their own path and live a life that is marked by selfishness and dishonesty will, when they get older, not depart from that lifestyle, either (Stuart 1980, 52). To avoid this, parents will need to provide training that demonstrates the difference between right and wrong as early as possible (Clendenen 1993, 188).

The opening verses of Proverbs 22 indicate the positive values one should instill in children when training them up (vv. 1, 3, 4, 5). These are values that will not

come naturally and are lacking as a result of the Fall. The training should transcend how to put on a garment or how to walk down the street. The training should be something more than just holding the door for a female or washing your hands before dinner. The training should be the training of the Lord (22:6). Essentially, the training should be that which is foundational to piety and properly prepares the child for life (Allen 1971a, 69). The Israelite children were to know the Law of Moses (Deut 6:6-9), and children of Christian parents are to know the law, as well (Mark 12:28-34).

This instruction will not be a standard form of instruction for every child. Although the content of the lessons, the fear and admonition of the Lord, will not change, the instruction will vary depending on the child and his or her personality and other unique characteristics. For this reason, some have felt inclined to exegete this verse to say "train up a child according to his bent". The parent must know the child. Is the child stubborn? Is the child a clown? Is the child a leader or a follower? All of these considerations, plus more, will need to be calculated regarding the manner in which the parent instructs the child. This is not to suggest that the parent attempt to change the child's personality. The parent, however, must understand the child's personality and instruct the child from such an understanding.

When considering the content of instruction proposed in Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4, one need go no further than Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (esp. vv. 4-5). In these verses, the community of Israel receives theological instruction and a structure that should continue throughout their lives (Dumbrell 2002, 59). Jesus, in the Gospels, repeats the command found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, as the greatest commandment by which all believers are to live, and He follows it with a second command to love our

neighbors (Mark 12:29-31; cf. John 13:34-35). For the contemporary Christian, it is imperative also to include this second command uttered by Jesus in Mark 12:31 as part of the training and instruction of the Lord.

More significantly is the fact that, when it is taught and obeyed, the legacy of the fear of the Lord will pass from generation to generation. It is important to this study to point out that the generations that Moses identifies are specifically the sons (Deut 6:2). It is also significant to notice, although some may find it petty, that the "you" to whom Moses is addressing himself, is masculine in the Hebrew. Moses is specifically calling the men to teach their sons, who will in turn become husbands and fathers, themselves, and teach their own sons. The teaching is such that it should be on their mind when they are at rest or when they are busy (*when you sit…when you walk by the way*), it should begin and end each day (*when you lie down and when you rise*), they should think of it as they work with their hands (*bind them as a sign on your hand*), it should be at the forefront of their minds (*frontlets between your eyes*), and it should be considered as they depart and return from their home (*write them on the doorposts…and on your gates*). The teaching should be central to the life of the individual and the family (Dumbrell 2002, 59). These symbols are to be taken more metaphorically than literally, but ultimately, they should draw attention to the commands of the preceding verses (Barker, Kohlenberger, 1994, 247). The biblical model of the role of a father can be summarized in two parts: fathers should not take advantage of their position of power and authority, and they should pass on the knowledge of God and His Kingdom to the next generation to seek redemption from the Fall.

Redemption: Husband and Wife

A major result of the Fall is that the relationship between man and woman was marred. God tells Eve that her desire shall be for her husband (Gen 3:16). In the latter section of Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, he addresses the Christian relationship of marriage (Wood 1981, 75). Although true redemption is achieved through the blood of Christ spilt on the cross, the Christians efforts in marriage, family, and life should reflect the work of the cross. To the husband, Paul commands love for his wife just as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25), and then proceeds to describe in detail what the love of Christ looks like (Eph 5:26-27). In describing Christ, Paul follows the verb "love" with three descriptors to clearly demonstrate the lengths Christ went to on the church's behalf. Paul uses words such as παρέδωκεν (handed himself over/self-sacrifice), ἁγιάσῃ καθαρίσας (sanctified and cleansed the church), and παραστήσῃ...ἁγία (present the church as holy) to describe Christ's actions of love towards the church.

In verse twenty-eight, after the description of Christ, Paul reiterates that it is in the same manner, with the same love, by which husbands are to love their wives (Hubbard, Barker, 1990, 378). Quite often in Scripture, the indicatives are the basis for the imperatives (Vogel, 2008). Paul is commanding husbands to love their wives based upon the love they have themselves already received from God the Father Almighty through Jesus Christ (Keck 2000, 451). Christ came to redeem the church. A husband's Christ-like love for his wife should be a reflection of that redemption.

It is the single verb "love", which Paul uses to sum up the role and responsibility of the husband. In this case, however, Paul commands a particular type of love, a redemptive love. As opposed to the verb for brotherly love (φιλέω) or passionate

love (ερος), both of which can easily be identified and performed in the marriage union, Paul is very specific to use the word for unconditional, unending love (ἀγαπάω) (Wood 1981, 76). It is this same word for love that is used to describe God's love for us and Christ's love for the church (John 3:16; Eph 5:25) (Longman III, Garland, 2006, 151). It is the same word for love that translators understood and ascribed to Moses when describing God's love for the Israelites and the same love that the Israelites were commanded to return to the Lord (Deut 4:27; 6:5, LXX). It is the same love that Jesus commands to the Scribe in answering what is the greatest commandment (Mark 12:30-31). It is with this unconditional love by which husbands are to love their wives.

Paul further explains the idea of unconditional love with an illustration of washing. The imagery of washing can be found in the Old Testament with the practice of the priests washing themselves in the bronze basin that was found in the courtyard of the temple (Exod 30:17-21). The practice of the priests was to wash before going in to the Holy Place in order to cleanse themselves before entering the presence of God (Averbeck 2003, 815).

For the New Testament church, the washing consisted of baptism, with the "word" (Eph 5:26) being those words spoken over an individual before the ordinance of baptism (Driver et al. 1979, 168). It is important to consider that the purpose of Christ's washing was in order to present the church to Himself as holy and without blemish (Eph 5:27). Paul does not imply nor suggest that it is the outward action of washing through baptism that is the work of purification, but it is only through the inward work of God that one will be sanctified (Pringle 1996, 319). In washing, the husband is not in control of his wife's sanctification, but this does not dismiss the required actions of cherishing

and nurturing which are to follow. For the husband to emulate the baptism of the Church by Christ, he must strive to wash his wife with the Word and to present her as holy, as well. It is a call by Paul not to neglect one's spouse, but rather to give her the utmost attention. Further still, it is the call to give the wife the same attention that the husband would give himself (Eph 5:28). The nourishing and cherishing that husbands supply to their own bodies should also be supplied to their wives.

Considering the spiritual realm of this command, the call is for husbands to spiritually nurture and cherish their wives (i.e., beyond ερος and φιλέω) as a redemptive act. The author of Ephesians is borrowing these "nursery" terms (nurture and cherish) in order to establish the role of husband to wife (Allen 1971b, 170). Nursery care, however, is not limited to physical nurturing and cherishing, but also extends to the intellectual growth of the child. Much more than physical care, the call of the husband is to disciple his wife in the truths of Scripture (Keck 200, 451). In other passages, we see that the husband is to guide his wife through the questions of Scripture (1 Cor 14:35), and here the husband is called to devote himself (*leave his father and mother,* Gen 2:24) to his wife in that pursuit. It is not a role of self-assertion, but rather it is a role of self-sacrifice (Beare 1953, 721). The action of giving oneself for another is the indication of ultimate devotion.

The biblical model of the role of the husband can be summarized by saying that husbands are to lead their wives in a spiritual walk in the same way that they are spiritually walking (cf. 1 Cor 14:34-35). Husbands do not do this for themselves; rather, husbands do it for their wives and ultimately for the glory of God the Father. The body does not naturally get clean, but naturally gets dirty. So, too, it is with the spiritual walk.

If the Christian does nothing, he or she will naturally get dirty, spiritually. The husband must be intentional in the spiritual growth of his own body and so, too, in the spiritual discipleship of his wife.

It seems appropriate that in Ephesians, Paul addresses the role of husband to wife before he addresses the role of father to children. In borrowing from Bowlby's attachment theory, and demonstrated in a study performed by Jane Dickie, one can see that as children develop, there are certain images of God perceived through the eyes of a child, one of which is God as nurturing when the father is nurturing (Granqvist and Dickie 2006, 201). For Paul, and for Christians, this nurturing begins between the husband and the wife and then proceeds to the child.

Redemption: Parent and Child

Paul follows his exhortations to husbands in Ephesians 5 with an exhortation for children to obey their parents in the opening verses of Ephesians 6. Paul concludes Ephesians 6:4 with a direct command to fathers. The command is two-fold, consisting of a negative and a positive admonition (Allen 1971b, 171). Paul tells the fathers one thing they are not to do as well as one thing they are to do. He first urges fathers to avoid provoking their children to anger, and, instead, commands them to strive in instructing their children in the school of the Lord, which is the Christian life (Allen 1971b, 171). The effort towards the latter should ultimately negate the former (Pringle 1996, 329).

Paul is more concerned with the positive responsibility for instruction than he is with the negative aspects of discipline (Keck 2000, 453). The positive to which Paul urges fathers is comparable to the role of husbands in regards to their wives. Paul urges fathers, first, to bring their children up—to train them. The word used in Ephesians 6:4 by

Paul, ἐκτρέφω (translated "bring up"), to refer to children, is the same Greek word he uses in Ephesians 5:29 for "nourishes", when referring to wives. Just as the call of a husband is to "nourish" his wife like his own body, the call of a father is to "nourish" his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Longman III, Garland, 2006, 157). The Greek word, παιδεία (translated "discipline" by ESV and others), often has a negative connotation in the English language. However, the word can also be translated "training" (ex. see HCSB, NASB, NIV, NKJV), which carries the nourishing idea past the provocation to anger, which "discipline" may represent.

It is the ultimate duty of a father to raise and rear his children alongside of his wife. It is one of the basic elements of the role of father. Fathers have an enormous power over their children, not only in the negative, as Paul initially discussed in Ephesians 6:4, but also in the positive, that he discussed at the end of verse four. Fathers are to bring up their children in discipline and instruction (Eph 6:4b). Fathers are to teach their children (Deut 6:7). Fathers are to guide their children (Prov 22:6). Fathers are to protect their children (Eph 6:4a). Fathers are to provide for their children (1 Tim 5:8). As Christians, fathers are called to do all of this in the knowledge and instruction of the Lord (Deut 6:20-25). The discipline and instruction by which the father nourishes should be that of the Christian life (Allen 1971b, 171). It is not good enough to teach the children the world's standards, to guide them in the way of the world, or simply to provide for them materially— a father's "counsel must be truly Christian, the kind the Lord, Himself, provides" (Longman III, Garland, 2006, 157). This is the fulfillment of the role of a man in regards to fatherhood—that fathers might teach their children all they can of the greatness and power of God the Father.

It is a staggering thought that children are more than just offspring. Although parents have been entrusted with the fruit of their wombs, a day will come when these children may actually be brothers and sisters to their parents. As potential believers in Christ, each child has the possibility of one day standing before the throne of God, side-by-side their earthly parents, now as equals. When seen in this light, parents should take a different view and approach to the rearing and instruction in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Jones 2011).

Consummation

The end of this story is the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ will see all believers fully sanctified and free from the strains of this world. The first coming of Christ was not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill the Law (Matt 5:17). The Law of Moses came about from sin entering the world. Although much time passed between the Fall and the climb up Mt. Sinai, all were under the confines of the Law. The Law of Moses is grounded in teaching the fear of the Lord. It was Moses' primary objective to instill the fear of YHWH in the children of Israel (Metzger et al. 2001, 135). In contemporary western society, the fear of the Lord is slowly slipping away as children begin to see God as only loving and not punitive (Granqvist and Dickie 2006, 203). As parents have shifted their discipline style to make allowances for children to do as they please, this misguided love-oriented style of parenting has removed the fear concept from the relationship and attempted to write a different ending.

The centrality of the command found in Deuteronomy 6:5, for the Israelites to love God, becomes the focus from this point forward in the history of Israel as well as Christendom (Keck 1998, 343). For the believer, the most foundational requirement is to

love God, "and this love is to be the dynamic principle for [the believer's] life" (Archer 1994, 273). The significance for the contemporary Christian is that it is from these same verses in Deuteronomy that Jesus gleaned the greatest commandment in Mark 12:28-31 and Matthew 22:34-40 by which Christians are called to live (Harrison, Hubbard Jr. 1976, 168). Moses is not commanded by God to merely publish these laws, but rather he is commanded to teach the Israelites to do them (Nash 2003, 124). The more imminent significance for our current study is that the command was not just for the Israelites to live out the law themselves (Deut 6:1-6), but for the Israelites to teach these commands to their children (Hebrew: *sons*, literally: *descendants*) and their children's children (Deut 6:2, 7), for the sake of the promise. New Testament Christians have the promise of consummation. The story is not over, and no one has arrived. With that sobering thought in mind, Christian parents should be focused on the eternity to come, and striving all the way to get there.

When reading and exegeting passages such as Ephesians 6:4, Deut 6:1-9, and Proverbs 22:6 the believer can see and learn that he or she is not left to him or herself. The individual's father and mother are not only important, but are also vital to the development of the spirituality and religiosity of the child and adolescent. And what about the child or adolescent convert who does not have Christian parents or parents acting as Christians? As Paul commands Titus to find men worthy to teach and older women to train the younger women (Titus 1:5-9; 2:1-5), so the contemporary church should rise up and adhere to the same biblical command in regards to the spiritual development of the children and adolescents—but not in place of the parents and the home.

No amount of teaching or instruction can transcend the grace poured out by Jesus on the cross. And no effort on the part of a Christian can fully experience the sanctifying work of Jesus Christ on this side of heaven. And until that day comes, when Christ shall descend and rule with the Father, Christians are called to work towards redemption. As parents we are to train and instruct our children. As followers of Christ we are called to make disciples. What's the difference?

Underlying Biblical Truths

A close examination of the New Testament will reveal specific biblical truths in regards to instructions on how one should parent in the home. Rob Plummer, author of "Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord: Family discipleship among the first Christians" points out four (Plummer 2011). The first, "he must manage his household well," he derived from 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12; and Titus 1:6. The second, "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord," he found in Ephesians 6:4. Thirdly, "do not provoke your children to anger," can be found in Colossians 3:21 and Ephesians 6:4. And lastly, "children, obey your parents," is found in Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20.

Other principles for parents to follow in leading and guiding in the home may be gleaned from the Titus 1 qualifications for elders. Godly parents will need to be above reproach, not arrogant or quick tempered, not violent or greedy, but should be hospitable, self-controlled, holy, and disciplined.

Biblical Historical Precepts

Based upon the metanarrative of Scripture, it would be prudent to consider what happens when individuals do not follow the commands of Scripture. Although

Christians often seek out biblical examples to guide their life and decisions, the better question is what is the biblical precept? As a Christian considers the metanarrative of Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation, what principles are discovered through Scripture that serve as the basis for Christian efforts? As it concerns the training and instruction of the Lord, what principles can be gleaned from Scripture to guide the Christian in the pursuit of household family discipleship?

Two Old Testament accounts demonstrate the consequences of turning from the instruction of the Lord, and the results of doing so. The first account is that of the High Priest Eli and his two sons Hophni and Phinehas. Not much is known about the two sons except that they were unruly, to say the least (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-26). The instruction and discipline of the Lord from Eli to his sons is obviously lacking. In 1 Samuel 2:27-36, Eli is even scorned for his sons' behavior and for his own disregard for the instruction of the Lord in regards to his two sons, but according to Scripture, he takes no measures to amend the situation. Hophni and Phinehas' spiritual development was in disrepair as evidenced by their sinful actions in the temple. It was not from the lack of a spiritual figurehead in their lives, it was the lack of the instruction in the fear of the Lord from that spiritual figurehead that caused these two sons to fall away from the love of God and into the vengeance of God.

Consider also the account of when King David went up to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Israel (2 Sam 6; 1 Chr 13 & 15). This incident does not examine David's father; rather, these passages demonstrate David's own ignorance of the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This is significant for this research to demonstrate that even our best intentions are not necessarily God's intentions.

The instructions outlined in the book of Numbers (4:15; 7:9) are clear concerning who was to transport the Ark and in what manner it was to be transported. David, instead of making the Ark procession a holy activity, made it a military activity. As king, David would have had access to the writings and commandments found in Numbers, just like Christians today have access to the Word of God. David's choice to ignore the instruction of the Lord resulted in an horrific situation where God reaped His judgment upon Uzzah for David's improper spiritual leadership (2 Sam 6:6-7).

It is dangerous to disregard the instruction of the Lord. In both of these situations, people received the punishment of death for their own actions in response to the poor spiritual leadership over them. In the case of David, his intentions were good. It was a good thing to want to retrieve the Ark from where it had been and return it to the people of Israel. Even with this good intention, however, David displeased the Lord. In this case, David's good intentions were not God's intentions. For the most part, youth ministers and family ministers across the country all have good intentions, but are they God's intentions?

These biblical accounts foreshadow the contemporary situation of spiritual development, especially as it pertains to adolescents. In the case of Eli and his sons, a parental figure did not fulfill his role and ignored the direct commands of God and Scripture. In the case of David, a spiritual figurehead disregarded the commands of Scripture and replaced Scripture with his own good intentions to create his own way of performing a ceremony which was not only in direct contradiction to what God commanded, but also aligned itself with the ways of the sinful world (that of the Philistines). In contemporary church settings, similar circumstances may be observed.

Overview of Perceived Crisis and Situation

The contemporary perceived crisis is that youth are dropping out of church. It has been this perceived crisis which has led many concerned individuals to develop, plan, and implement different ways of performing youth ministry. For some this has even meant writing books on the subject. The current situation, and quite possibly the more accurate crisis, however, is that parents appear to be delinquent in the area of pursuing household family discipleship. Coupled with this reality rises the concern over what churches are doing to sidle along with parents, training them for the task they have at hand. Although the responsibility to disciple the children falls to the parents, in what ways are churches assisting parents with this task? Out of this realized crisis has arisen three distinct models of family ministry which are becoming widely accepted by various denominations as the means to which address the concern. Not so much the concern over drop-out rates, but the concern over parental training for the task of parent pursued family discipleship.

Christian Smith: *Soul Searching*

Christian Smith, in his research, drew alarming conclusions in regards to the family. Smith was able to see a direct correlation between the faith of the families and the faith of the children (Smith and Denton 2005, 261). Although Smith identifies the parents as the number one vital resource for influencing the adolescent's life outcome as it pertains to faith formation, he does not present the lack of the parents' instruction as the primary cause for the lack of faith formation.

Christian Smith defines the issue as a theological issue raised by the "de facto" religion of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (Smith and Denton 2005, 162). The theology

of this religion is marked by certain traits that resemble a misconstrued view of God, truth, the Bible, and human purpose and design. This is not some club like the dead poets society that was invented by a group of youth's trying to discern and answer questions about life and the world. This is a religion that is, in part, reflective of the parents' religion (Smith and Denton 2005, 166). Contemporary adolescents, Christian and otherwise, are learning the practice of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism from the generation which precedes them.

This, however, is not an absolute guarantee. There were numerous examples from Smith's text which demonstrated a generational gap or a certain rebellion to the preceding generation. One such example Smith presented was an adolescent named Antwan. This was an adolescent who, despite the poor example of his father, had a positive example in his grandparents to whom he attributed much of his faith and walk. The point, here, is to demonstrate that if Antwan's grandparents were doing a satisfactory job to show Antwan the walk of the Christian faith and the truths of Scripture, then what happened to his dad? It is an assumption to say that Antwan's grandparents were just as good role models when Antwan's Dad was a child. Smith did not appear to attempt to answer the generational gap question, but held to his argument that "contrary to popular misguided cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misconceptions, [he] believes that the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents" (Smith and Denton 2005, 261).

Models of Family Ministry

The church has already begun to address the realized crisis of parental delinquency in regards to pursuing household family discipleship. The term *family*

ministry has become a hot topic as churches scurry to discover what they should be doing to assist the families of the churches. The development of the term and idea of *family ministry* was not in response to any one scholar, but in response to the issue at large. The church has been aware of the need to develop and implement programs, activities, and opportunities that would place some emphasis on the family. Not all of these paradigms look the same. Some churches have espoused one model, while other churches have championed another.

Although all the models will embrace the concept of family ministry as defined for this research, they each have variances when it comes to implementation, focus of attention, and roles of responsibility. Some churches simply call their efforts family ministry, while other churches have adopted a specific model that shares a common perspective and foundational tenets. One ministry method, and three specific models of family ministry have risen to the surface in the evangelical community: intergenerational ministry, family-integrated model, family-based model, and family-equipping model. Each of these approaches, in their own way, strive to answer the historical question, "What do we do with the youth?" Family ministry, by any of these names, is a movement to realign the contemporary church to the greater scheme of Scripture by exposing and frustrating the neo-traditional mentality of how to "do" church and an attempt to bring reform to the Christian home.

Intergenerational Church Ministry

The concept of intergenerational ministry is one which has been attempted by various churches under the guise of assorted activities and programs. It is not completely foreign to church leaders, but it is a concept that has not received much wide-spread

attention, until recently. Mary Duckert, a noted church educator, explains that

> "Intergenerational education can take many forms. It can be as ambitious as a series of Advent workshops for the entire congregation, or as uncomplicated as the meeting together of three or four families to discuss an issue concerning all of them. Sometimes it involves two generations, sometimes three and four. It may be an event, a prescribed number of events, or an ongoing part of an educational system" (Duckert 1976, 7).

For most churches that adopt the intergenerational ministry method, the hope will most likely be to create an ongoing system between the generations of the church where positive and cultivating interactions take place. According to James White, the church is the institution to bring the generations together (White 1988, 11).

Of the four church movements considered here, the intergenerational ministry movement is probably the least innovative of all. Although literature is limited, and no distinct model has been established, the foundations of intermingling the generations have inculcated congregations for a number of decades. Stuart Briscoe, former senior pastor of Elmbrook Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin initiated an intergenerational ministry shortly after assuming his role as Senior Pastor (Zahn 2002, 37). In addition to Briscoe's church, numerous other churches have either independently or cooperatively established a ministry focus which attempts to bring the generations within the church together, rather than pushing them apart. Stephen Ong, pastor of Reformation Baptist Church notes that "too many families were living Christianity only at church…I figured if we could bring families together in their walk of faith on Sundays, it would create mutual accountability that would stay with them throughout the week" (Zahn 2002, 38).

The church events can include such times as fathers and sons attending activities together, or involving the youth in volunteer work that directly contributes to the needs of a different generation (ex. senior adults, pre-schoolers). The goal in all of

the events and planning is to not become a program driven church that focuses on programs for the families as opposed to programs focused on the individual generations.

Ben Freudenburg, author of *The Family Friendly Church,* insists that the transition to intergenerational focused ministry must be gradual. Drew Zahn, assistant editor of the journal *Leadership,* notes that intergenerational churches start in only one of two ways: either from the ground up, or else very slowly (Zahn 2002, 39). Within the intergenerational movement, Ben Freudenburg notes that there needs to be room for both the age-specific ministries and the age-integrated ministries (Freudenburg and Lawrence 1998, 102). The former is intended to teach the stories and concepts of the faith, while that latter is intended to "incorporate those truths into relationships" (Zahn 2002, 39).

Don Baron, pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Honolulu, Hawaii, emphasizes the focus on relationships by integrating the generations in weekly small groups, what his, and other churches sometimes call "cell" groups (Baron). In describing the idea of the cell group, Baron notes that just like in biology, the cell is a unit of life. However, in the church cell group, the life that was often missing was the life of the child (Baron). After noticing that many of his parishioners were seeking out childcare for cell group night or simply not attending at all for lack of childcare, Baron initiated an intergenerational cell group where the children now look forward to the events of the night and are involved in the cell group.

Another way to view the intergenerational ministry method would be to avoid the term "family" altogether, and, instead, use the term "households." Within every church there are bound to be "families" that do not have a father or a mother (or at least a father or mother active in the church). In addition, there will be singles who would not

consider themselves a family. Some churches will have neighborhood children arrive by

themselves, or as the guests of other church members. Some families will be incomplete

due to divorce, and others due to death. For these reasons the intergenerational ministry

method seeks to redefine family to include all households (i.e., a home, no matter who

lives there) (Zahn 2002, 38).

Although numerous churches and denominations have adopted the

intergenerational ministry method, there is not a single means by which to follow, or

conduct, an intergenerational church. Various institutions have begun to emphasize the

need for intergenerational integration. Fuller Theological Seminary has initiated an effort

to bring more attention to the intergenerational ministry method with awareness through

its Fuller Youth Institute (Fraze 2008). Hesston College in Hesston, Kansas, has brought

attention to the need by identifying intergenerational ministry and better Bible teaching as

the top two concerns for the Mennonite youth of today (Hershberger 2007). In addition,

Calvin College's, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, sponsored an event called "The

Intergenerational Ministry Conference" where an awareness of the need for

intergenerational ministry was raised as the focal point of the conference (Verhulst 2009).

Although many churches utilize intergenerational methods, and certain

institutions strive to bring awareness to the need for intergenerational ministry, the

intergenerational ministry method is not sufficiently distinct as a model at this time. For

this reason the intergenerational ministry method will be excluded from the research and

the following three (3) models will be considered for the proposed research.

Family-Integrated Church Model

The family-integrated church model is quite radical when compared to what

most people would consider characteristic of the church. Most people, when they think of church, will quickly associate Sunday school with church. Others will just as readily think of youth group as part of the church going process. This is how most people, in today's culture, grew up in church—by attending such functions. The family-integrated church, however, has eliminated both of these. A family-integrated church will not have a Sunday school hour, nor will they have a youth minister, and they will not have youth group. The family-integrated church strives to put the family at the forefront of the discipleship and worship process by eliminating any such entity which would compromise those efforts. In his book, *Uniting Church and Home,* Eric Wallace suggests such integrating practices as establishing family Sunday School lessons and Wednesday Family Worship (Wallace 2003, 231; 233).

In the family-integrated church model, although not directly tied to a denomination or greater church body, a select number of organizations and associations have identified themselves as the leaders in the movement, offering resources, as well as encouragement through biblical teaching, to promote the efforts of a family-integrated church. Among these are the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches (NCFIC) with Scott Brown as director, the Alliance for Church and Family Reformation (ACFR) with Paul Renfro as the director of operations, and Vision Forum Ministries (VFM) which serves the families of family-integrated churches, with Doug Phillips as president.

It is clear that NCFIC stands opposed to the structure and practices of the contemporary church. They do not consider themselves a denomination, nor to have the only solution to what they refer to as "the culture-driven, age-segregated, peer-dominated [contemporary] church" (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009a).

Some of the missional statements of the NCFIC are to "identify the marks of worldliness in church and family in the 21st century", "communicate the biblical doctrine of the family", and "restore the biblical pattern of age integrated, family integrated worship, discipleship and evangelism" (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009b). Article seven of the confessions of NCFIC reads, "We deny/reject the modern trend embraced by many churches to undermine the purpose and government of both family and church, by substituting family-fragmenting, age-segregated, peer-oriented, youth driven, and special-interest programs, which may prevent rather than promote family unity, church unity, and inter-generational relationships" (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009c).

The ACFR was established by Paul Renfro out of Grace Family Baptist church in Spring, Texas. Another notable elder from Grace Family Baptist church is ACFR chairman, Voddie Baucham, Jr. According to the Grace Family Baptist website, the ACFR exists to educate, facilitate, and proliferate the family-integrated churches (Alliance for Church and Family Reformation 2009). The ACFR strives to educate the broader body of Christ in the efforts of the family-integrated church movement, facilitate family worship, catechism, and family discipleship, and proliferate the family-integrated church movement through partnership, training, and connecting pastors and the like-minded (Alliance for Church and Family Reformation 2009). The ACFR also offers consultation, conferences, and campus visits to better educate and train pastors and ministry leaders in the family-integrated church model.

Because of the emphasis on the removal of age segregated instructional entities, it is quite common to find a large percentage of the members of a family-

integrated church who home school their children. Vision Forum was established as a ministry to aid and assist in the development and production of home schooling materials for the families of the family-integrated churches, as well as other family focused products that emphasize positive character traits through history and character sketches. The founder, Doug Phillips, is a prominent proponent of the family-integrated church model and is an elder at Boerne Christian Assembly in San Antonio, Texas, which is a prominent family-integrated church. Doug Phillips, in addition to serving on the board, is the founder of the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009d).

These three organizations make up the majority of the family-integrated church movement as it exists today. The three organizations share the common perspective that Scripture is inerrant. The three organizations agree that the home is the fountainhead of family discipleship. The three also share a strong bent towards the belief in home-schooling being the best option considering the commands of Scripture as well as the state of public education. In addition to the three men who head and direct these organizations, Voddie Baucham, Jr. is a prominent spokesperson for the family-integrated churches.

Voddie Baucham: *Family-Driven Faith*

Voddie Baucham's position is two-fold. He is first quick to point out that as parents, we have failed our children spiritually if we have failed to train them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Baucham 2007, 27; 89). Secondly, he points out that the church, through its programs and its methodologies has failed the families (Baucham 2007, 174-183). Baucham is in pursuit of what he refers to as

multigenerational faithfulness (Baucham 2007, 16). This is a concept which infers that Baucham is not done when his children are married and out of the house. This is a concept which means Baucham is investing himself in the lives of his children for the sake of his children's children.

Baucham contends that his efforts toward this end are for proper training and instruction. For Baucham, this training and instruction consist of, and are exhibited through, a proper biblical worldview (Baucham 2007, 69). For Baucham there is one main opponent to a proper biblical worldview, and that is Secular Humanism (Baucham 2007, 77). Secular Humanism, according to Baucham, is the driving force in our culture today which has begun to, if it has not, already, replace Christian Theism even in the minds of some believers (Baucham 2007, 77). The call, then, is to develop a biblical worldview in the minds of the children of Christians. The question, then, is whose call is this? Is this the call of the church? Is this the call of the pastor? Is this the call of the parents? According to Baucham, and he points to Deuteronomy 6:7 for support, this is the call of the parents (Baucham 2007, 89).

Although public education has played a major role in the continued pull away from Christian Theism, Baucham also finds fault with the methodologies of the church. In accordance with Christian Smith, Baucham recognizes that too many Christians have consciously or unconsciously (due to cultural norms) deferred the instruction of the Bible to the church and the professionals and ministers within the church (Baucham 2007, 90). The startling evidence that the National Study of Youth and Religion provides, is that the professionals and ministers will not have as great an impact, if the rest of the adolescent's faith formation is lacking (Smith and Denton 2005, 269-270). This is not to suggest that

the church does not play *a* role, but it is to suggest that church does not play the *primary* role.

Baucham contends that the adolescent's faith formation is not a function of the church, nor is it the responsibility of the youth minister or Sunday school teacher. Baucham argues that the faith formation of the adolescent is the responsibility of the family, specifically the parents (Baucham 2007, 89). The crisis in adolescent spiritual development, then, will continue in the contemporary culture until parents rise to the calling they have been entrusted with, through the proper understanding of Scripture. The irony that Baucham's position presents, is that it has been the church attempting to fill a void left by the parents, which has now propelled the parents to widen the void.

In his book, *Family Driven Faith*, Baucham contends for the role of fathers and husbands in the home. He presents a clear, concise, scripturally based argument that identifies not only the present condition of the church and the need for a paradigm shift, but also a means for achieving that paradigm shift. He notes, in his book, that family driven faith "is more than just being a better parent" (Baucham 2007, 169). For Baucham, it is a complete lifestyle overhaul that will put the church in a position to aid families, rather than hinder them (Baucham 2007, 169). He identifies four distinctives and four guiding principles of the family-integrated church. The distinctives are that families worship together, there is no systematic segregation, evangelism and discipleship exists and is practiced in, and through, the homes, and there is an emphasis on education as a key component of discipleship. The guiding principles are to promote a biblical view of marriage and family, promote family worship and discipleship, promote Christian education, and promote biblically qualified leadership. At first glance, any

Christian would struggle to challenge either of these lists.

When Baucham and the family-integrated church movement suggests that families worship together, they are not simply referring to the teenager sitting next to his or her parents, but even includes the presence of infants in the sanctuary (Baucham 2007, 193). The presence of family units is not isolated to the sanctuary. Through the distinctive of eliminating systematic age segregation, family-integrated churches have incorporated families into every function and activity of the church. It is not just occasional participation, nor is it additional programming, rather it is complete integration. The third distinctive, evangelism and discipleship in and through the home, calls for the removal of the youth minister and the accession of the father to the role of discipler of his own children. The call for reform in education not only stresses the need for discipleship to take all forms and consume the child, but is also a reaction against the present state of education in our country (Baucham 2007, 193-201).

The principles which Baucham outlines are not principles which he expects, nor even desires churches to adopt, adapt, and overcome overnight (Baucham 2007, 201-202). The four principles are a call to initiate a paradigm shift, which will transform the church and the family. The principles are intended to be guides for the pastor seeking ways to shift the paradigm in his own church. It should be noted on the third principle, promote Christian education, that Baucham's call is not for every family to withdraw from the school building and take refuge under their own roof. It is a call for pastors and church leaders to bring to the attention of their flocks the current state of public education and promote the healthiest option available (Baucham 2007, 207).

Due to the absence of a doctrinal statement of the family-integrated church,

which clearly outlines and defines in detail the elements of the church, one is forced to

rely on the characteristics of the three explained organizations and the broader

explanation by Voddie Baucham. Some of those involved in the movement may take

case against some of the positions Baucham purports, either finding them to be too

liberal, or even too conservative, for the manner in which they conduct family-integrated

church. It does seem, however, that the distinctives and principles presented by Baucham

are representative of the family-integrated church as a general whole.

Family-Equipping Church Model

The term *family-equipping* ministry will likely be foreign to most. It is a term

coined by Timothy Paul Jones, Associate Professor of Discipleship and Family Ministry

at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky (Jones et al. 2009,

51). This model is distinct from family-integrated in that it seeks to maintain the offices

of youth pastor and children's minister, while championing and equipping the parents.

The objective of the model is to realign the focus of the church. Instead of eliminating

the offices and programs of the church (like the family-integrated church model would

propose), or seeking ways in which to merely intermingle the generations represented in

the church (like the intergenerational church), the family-equipping model seeks to

redirect the attention of the church to the parents while utilizing the existing programs

and incorporating multiple generations. It is a church wide effort to plan every ministry

to champion the parents as the primary disciplers of their children (Jones et al. 2009, 51).

To understand the need for both the church and the family, Jones has

developed an image of a running river with a bank on each side. Inside the river are

rocks jutting out here and there, with the running water to represent the growth and

development of the child and adolescent. The banks of the river are in place to guide the

river in the way that it should go. One of the banks represents the church, while the other

represents the parents (Jones et al. 2009, 52). Both banks are necessary for the river to

run its course. If one of the banks were removed, or faltered in any way, then the river

would not be running anymore. Rather, it would turn into a stagnant pond.

Quite often, the argument against the positions of youth pastor and age-

segregated programs comes in the form that they are unbiblical. Although some equate

this notion of being unbiblical with being sinful, that is not always the case. Most

scholars, like Voddie Baucham, would contend that something is only unbiblical when it

is not found in the Bible, and not necessarily sinful. Baucham uses the example of a

microphone, pulpit and even a church building, as we know it, to be things missing from

the book of Acts, and thereby, unbiblical (Baucham 2007, 179). Baucham's concern, as

well as the concern of the family-equipping model, is when the office and function of the

youth minister has replaced the role of the parents in the discipling of the children. This

unbiblical structure (age-segregated programs) only becomes sinful when it does not take

strides to champion the parents in the eyes of the child and train the parents for their roles

as disciplers.

In support of the family-equipping model, Steve Wright offers suggestions to

churches on how the church might champion the parents and realign its efforts to support

the parents in their biblical mandate (Wright and Graves 2007, 75). One way in which

Wright's church, Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, achieves this is

through their Parent Leadership Teams (Wright and Graves 2007, 175). This model

allows the parents to be involved with the ministry at the church, as well as find

platforms on which they can continue the discipleship process at home. This model not only allows the parents to fulfill their discipleship role in the home, but also provides training through the church to be more prepared to do so. Borrowing from Jones' riverbank illustration (Jones et al. 2009, 52), the two riverbanks are working in tandem to promote healthy youth discipleship, while placing the parents in the primary role.

To borrow another illustration, Jones suggests that the when the church is properly performing family-equipping ministry, the will be doing one of three things. The church will either be training the parents for household family discipleship, involving the parents in the pursuit of household family discipleship, or equipping the parents to pursue household family discipleship. Jones refers to this as the *TIE* strategy (Train, Involve, Equip). The strategy may be illustrated as follows:
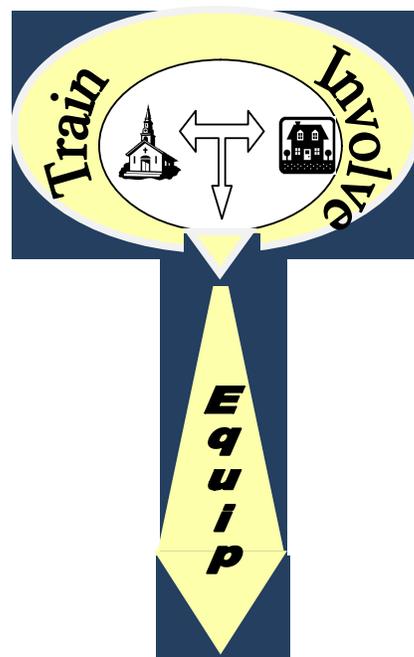
Figure 1: Train, involve, equip strategy

Randy Stinson, Dean of the School of Church Ministries at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Jones developed the model as a means of utilizing the churches ministries, while emphasizing the parents' responsibilities (Jones et al. 2009, 51). This is a model which, in every way, seeks to raise up the parents and train them to be the disciplers that they are called to be. Steve Wright espoused such a model in his book, *ReThink* (Wright and Graves 2007).

Steve Wright: *ReThink*

Steve Wright, Pastor of Student Ministries at Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, and author of *ReThink*, recognizes the need for parents in the discipling process of youth. At the same time, he recognizes the power the church has in being a part of the process, as the church ministers to families. Wright bases the majority of his position on the biblical mandate that parents are to be the primary disciplers in the lives of their children (Wright and Graves 2007, 145-148). Moreover, from the world's standards, Wright demonstrates that the parents have the primary influence in the adolescent's life (Wright and Graves 2007, 81-83).

Wright's conclusions present an interesting concept: the parents not only have the ability to influence their children, but should also be doing all they can to influence their children. Wright proceeds to present a model of church ministry which incorporates the two ideas of biblical mandate and primary influencer. In addition to demonstrating the responsibility of parents, Wright also presents the church as a vital organism in the life of the process (Wright and Graves 2007, 94). As opposed to the dilemma of the church wielding the reigns of youth discipleship (Wright and Graves 2007, 142), Wright presents the case for yielding the reigns of youth discipleship to the parents (Wright and

Graves 2007, 75-76).

Wright appears to be more in line with Christian Smith's conclusion than he is with Voddie Baucham's conclusion. Instead of eliminating the youth minister and age segregated Sunday school classes, Wright sees a need to develop these entities for the purpose of championing the parents, and equipping them as necessary (Wright and Graves 2007, 75, 87, 105). Amidst other reasons, Wright identifies the amount of time the parents spend with their children, as well as the ultimate influence the parents will have over their children in comparison to a youth worker, as reasons why parents will have a greater opportunity to disciple than anyone else (Wright and Graves 2007, 151, 153).

Wright suggests that the church is a vital instrument in achieving what Baucham strives to accomplish without the church. Wright suggests that just as much as the parents are the primary disciplers of their children (Wright and Graves 2007, 145), the church is an important part of God's plan to facilitate that discipleship (Wright and Graves 2007, 94-95, 105). As a part of that conclusion, Wright presents a case for, and examples of, how the church might partner with parents in order to best see the fruitfulness of the discipleship process as the parents assume their biblical responsibility.

Quite often scholars will defer to Deuteronomy 6 when considering and arguing for the role of parents in the discipleship of the children. One factor that must be considered, and reinforced, when contemplating the family-equipping model, is that Moses, who was not the father of every Israelite, was equipping the Israelites to disciple their families. He was, in essence, the church (i.e., voice of God) communicating what they must do for multi-generational faithfulness. The church is in a position to equip and

train parents, just as Moses trained the Israelite parents.

Family-Based Church Model

After realizing that all of the youth activities he was doing was harmful to his ministry, Mark DeVries decided to eliminate some of the weekly activities at his church in Nashville, Tennessee (DeVries 2004, 99-100). Although this was not a welcome change at first, by keeping some of the core activities in place DeVries was able to better mobilize parents. The underlying foundation to family-based youth ministry is two-fold. The first part of the foundation is to train the parents of the congregation. In the words of DeVries, this is priority number one (DeVries 2004, 103). Without the statistical data that Smith and Denton provide, DeVries draws the same conclusion that the National Study of Youth and Religion demonstrates: children and youth are heavily influenced by their parents (DeVries 2004, 104). With this understanding, DeVries makes training the parents one of the foundational pieces of his family-based ministry model.

The second component of the foundation for DeVries is the need to train the extended family of the church. DeVries sees the church community as integral in the process of faith formation. DeVries speaks out against families that cluster in their own home making every attempt to avoid the influences of others (DeVries 2004, 104). DeVries seeks to make the greater faith community the family, and reminds us that our first loyalty should be to God, and not family (DeVries 2004, 105).

Brandon Shields is another proponent to the family-based model of ministry. He suggests that family-based is not so much a model as it is a philosophy (Shields 2009, 98). The ministry model itself resembles the age-segregated model of ministry that most are familiar with, but with greater flexibility (Shields 2009, 98). According to Shields,

age-segregation is not the problem (Shields 2009, 100). Shields would agree with Jim Burns and Mark Devries that the problem is in the mind-set of the parents and the church, not in the programs themselves. Jim Burns and Mark DeVries, in their book *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry,* suggest that what is needed is a fresh mindset because parents and family are crucial to faith development (Burns and DeVries 2003, 7).

With this fresh mindset purpose, Shields suggests that parents and churches move away from three potentially harmful types of age-segregated youth ministry. The first, "activity-driven ministry" seeks to keep the youth busy with activities and excursions mostly for the sake of entertainment. The second, "uni-generational ministry" seeks to avoid the youth leading or discipling the youth. Avoiding this type of youth ministry will mean realizing that older individuals can and should be a part of the ministry to the youth. The danger lies in when churches conclude that the only individual who can reach the youth generation is another vey young individual who is "hip" (Shields 2009, 109). The third and final type of ministry that Shields warns against is the culturally immersed ministry. Shields' warning is to avoid the need to accommodate culture when cultural relevance is truly what is being sought (Shields 2009, 110).

Summation

It becomes clear that each of these models, although unique in nature, have some common underlying themes and beliefs. To begin with, each of the individuals who are leaders within these ministry models hold to the supremacy of Scripture. The models are not defined nor structured on cultural standards seeking to raise children of the world, but rather children of the Bible. Based on that premise, each model, in obedience to Scripture, places the primary responsibility for the faith development of the

family on the shoulders of the parents. This standard is derived from the proper

understanding of Deuteronomy 6 and the implications of the correlating New Testament

passages found in Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21.

Wright, Smith, Baucham, and DeVries agree that there is, in our culture, a

misguiding of priorities. Smith and Baucham identify the genres of sports, entertainment,

and romance, as often interfering with, and taking precedence over, the role of religion in

the home (Smith and Denton 2005, 161; Baucham 2007, 36). By default, the

adolescent's search for spirituality is too often fulfilled in the one area that consumes the

most time out of their daily lives. With this realization, Smith appears surprised that

there are as many religious youth as there are today. He further emphasizes, in contrast

to Baucham, that the church has failed the youth more than the parents. He does not

conclude that every church has failed, but strictly those churches that do not prioritize

ministry to youth and invest in trained and skilled youth leaders (Smith and Denton 2005,

261).

Baucham would conclude that it is this mindset of the church that does not

drive the family closer to the biblical model of adolescent spiritual development, but

rather drives it further away (Baucham 2007, 169). For Baucham, in order to achieve his

goal of multigenerational faithfulness there must be a paradigm shift in the way

Christians conduct church that will not only remove the apparent need for a youth

minister, but also replace the former responsibilities of that role with the biblically

commanded role of the parent (Baucham 2007, 90, 182).

Baucham presents a crisis that is the result of a shift in family values and

priorities. The church, according to Baucham, instead of thwarting this crisis, has

encouraged it through the process of implementing programs and practices which are either in direct contradiction to the Word of God, or not well enough substantiated by the Word of God, to validate their continued practice (Baucham 2007, 175-176). Smith, Baucham, and Wright make one point of intersection that dynamically influences this study and the future generations of adolescents that are currently in church and those currently being born into the church. It is the fact that, according to Baucham and Wright, parents are biblically commanded to *be* the number one influencer in their child's life in regards to religious matters (Baucham 2007, 89; Wright and Graves 2007, 145), and the fact that, according to Smith's research, they *are* the number one influencer in the child's life in regards to religious matters (Smith and Denton 2005, 261). Mark DeVries does contend that the parents are important, but does not appear to go to the point the other three individuals go.

Baucham calls for parents to begin to disciple their children in the Bible in the context of the home. Smith calls for the churches to step up and fill the gap with more well trained individuals that would not just be positive role models, but also the source of attention. Wright calls for the church to be co-champions with the parents and partner with the parents as they disciple their children in the fear and instruction of the Lord (Wright and Graves 2007, 105). DeVries calls for the parents and the greater community to step up and fill the gap (DeVries 2004, 103-104).

Each model strives to reverse the trend of delinquent parent discipleship. In addition to the conditions already mentioned, the models also agree that no matter which model a church may choose to begin and implement in their congregation—it will take time. Unless one is planting a church, any movement away from the current

contemporary model will need to be gradual enough, so as not to cause division and thwart the work of the church, but it must be done. The church must not just find a way in which to retain its youth into adulthood, but more importantly establish a biblical pattern which allows parents to raise their children into mature Christians. Each church must examine its current methods and consider if what they are doing is helping or hurting the family in regards to multi-generational faithfulness. The four innovative models considered here are striving to redefine the church's efforts to ensure the faithfulness of the generations to come. All of them have good intentions.

The question which remains is, "Are they working?" Or more specifically, "What is working?" Are there specific characteristics of the various models that are working better than others? As we consider the theological mandate for parents to be primarily involved in the discipleship of their children, which of these models creates the best atmosphere for that to happen? Which churches, models aside, are being most effective in the training of parents to disciple their own children? Who's good intentions best replicate God's intentions?

Timothy Paul Jones, in his book, *Perspectives on Family Ministry,* asserts that "every church is called to some form of family ministry. At the same time, there is not one single model of family ministry that will work in every community of faith" (Jones et al. 2009, 53). Is there, however, some way to determine what practices are effective? Is there a set of tools that, when implemented, a church could use to transform the lives of their youth through the biblical mandate of the parents?

The Present Story

The issue of reaching youth through the core family has been realized and is

being addressed at magnificent rates. Although not all institutions and scholars agree

about the particulars, three of the six Southern Baptist seminaries have adjusted their

approach to youth and family ministry to address the concerns previously discussed. The

models that have been gaining popularity and those individuals, who promote them,

amidst their differences, do find certain characteristics in common.

An effective way to understand the similarities along with the differences of

these models can be seen in the diagram below (see figure 2). All approaches have certain

points at which the scholars would agree and the model would look like its neighbor.

They all hold to the supremacy of Scripture. All agree that any movement for change in

the church must be gradual. All the models assert a need for the generations to interact.

Each model calls for the parents to be trained for the sake of the spiritual lives of the

children. The areas of the diagram where there is overlap represent these and other areas

of congruency. The areas where the diagram does not overlap represent areas unique to

that specific ministry model.

The family-based model and the family-integrated model do not overlap. The

first purports a methodology which utilizes the programming and staff of the church

while the latter vehemently opposes the function of age-segregated functions within the

church. Although they may come close in certain regards to a common understanding of

the need to reach the youth, the manner in which that is done will never be able to

intersect with these two models.
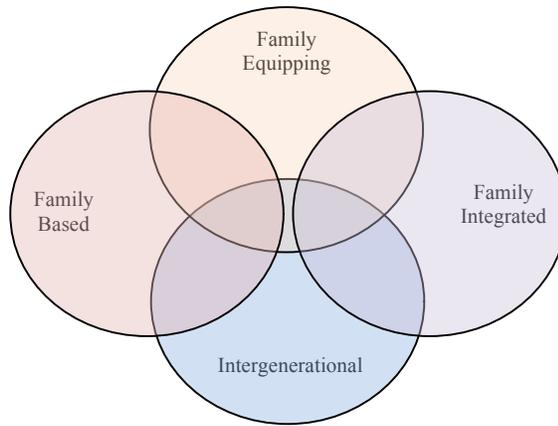
Figure 2: Family ministry models

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This chapter will outline the methods which will be used in order to explore the best practices for training parents for household family discipleship. In addition to a description of the research procedures, this chapter will describe the instrumentation to be used in conjunction with the research method, the population to be examined along with the sampling procedures, and any delimitations this study may require. An explanation of limitations to the generalizations of the study will also be considered.

Research Questions Synopsis

The following questions will direct the collection and analysis of the data for the proposed research study.

1. To what degree, and in what ways, do parents perceive and practice family discipleship as a household parental responsibility?

2. In what ways have churches taught parents their responsibility to disciple their own children?

3. In what ways do churches train and support parents in the congregation to fulfill their role as primary disciplers?

4. In what ways do churches assess the effectiveness of training parents to disciple their children?

Research Design Overview

The methodological design for this study will be to explore the perceptions and practices of parents concerning household family discipleship and the ways in which

churches train the parents to perform such practices. In order to most effectively establish a sample population for this study, an expert panel will be assembled. The expert panel will be compiled of nine individuals who have a significant voice within the evangelical world as it pertains to family ministry, within three distinct models of family ministry (family-based, family-integrated, and family-equipping). It is proposed that upon submission of the list of churches from the expert panel that all eligible parents from each congregation will be invited to take part in an online survey (Phase One). The survey, "The Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey," will be hosted by an on-line data collection service and will include an option to be entered into a drawing for one of three $50.00 gift cards. The survey will consist of twenty-four (24) questions and should take no more than ten (10) minutes to complete. The questions will be designed to identify the parents' perception of their role and responsibility as well as gauge the actual household practices which the parents are performing on a regular basis. The church's influence in the performance of such practices will also be explored. In an effort to capture the perspectives and practices of the parents as well as that of the church leadership, both will be examined.

Phase Two of the study will consist of phone or video interviews of all the nominated churches about the overall ministry approach and the specific plan or process in place to fulfill the family ministry objectives. Since the churches on the list have been nominated by the expert panel, all of the churches should and will be interviewed about their family ministry approach and practices. In addition, three churches will be selected to participate in case studies. These churches will be indentified through purposive sampling based upon the performance of the parents on the survey instrument. Each

survey participant will be asked to identify their church, and once the surveys are scored,

the churches with the highest mean score from each of the respective categories (family-

based, family-integrated, and family-equipping) will be invited to participate in a case

study.

The case studies will include, but not be limited to, face-to-face interviews

with key pastoral staff, collecting data from the church website, requesting copies of the

events calendars, staff handbooks, curricula, job descriptions, and notes from business

meetings. On-site visits will enhance the understanding of the daily efforts given to

family ministry as well as providing opportunities to evaluate attitude and behavior of the

church staff and parents. Further data may be collected through phone or video

interviews conducted as necessary with the key leaders in the church and those involved

in the regular implementation of the family ministry objectives.

Population

The research population for the first phase of this study will be parents

(married, man and woman) who have at least one child under the age of eighteen years

and greater than the age of eighteen months living at the same home or residence as the

parents, and who are members of a conservative evangelical church who hold and

conduct a family ministry philosophy and approach. The research population for the

second phase of this study will be conservative evangelical churches who hold and

conduct a family ministry philosophy and approach.

Samples and Delimitations

In order to narrow the research population from all churches who claim to hold

and conduct a family ministry approach, to those who are considered by the greater

conservative evangelical community to be doing family ministry well, an expert panel will be formed to identify those churches which are in fact conducting family ministry well. Because the expert panel will be comprised of conservative evangelical leaders, it is highly likely that all congregations nominated will be conservative evangelical by nature. If this is the case, the research will most likely be delimited to conservative evangelical congregations. After the expert panel has submitted their list of churches, it is anticipated that every church will be involved in the first phase of the study, while the second phase of the study will be limited to only a select group of churches.

The research sample of the first phase will be delimited to parents as defined by the researcher (married, man and woman) actively involved in the church listed by the expert panel and present on the membership roles. The research sample will further be delimited to those parents who have at least one child under the age of eighteen years but older than eighteen months living at home. This population will be crucial in identifying which churches are most effective in their efforts towards family ministry as defined by the literature and the researcher.

The research sample of the second phase will consist of select churches from the list provided by the expert panel. The purposive sampling of churches will be administered using the results of the first phase of study. The church whose parents score the highest mean in each family ministry model category will be selected for case study. Identification in the individual family ministry model will be determined by church affiliation. Since the goal of the research is to explore the best practices of those churches espousing to perform family ministry, it must first be determined which churches are effectively ministering to the parents of their congregation. Once the parents have

responded to the survey instrument, the church with the highest mean score from each category will be the research sample of the qualitative case study phase of the research to determine those best practices.

This study will confine itself to the churches identified by the expert panel as being churches who are effectively conducting family ministry ("family ministry" to be defined for the expert panel). Phase one of this study will confine itself to the survey of parents who are actively involved members in one of the identified churches. This study will also confine itself to those parents who currently have at least one child under the age of eighteen years but greater than eighteen months living at home. This phase of the study will also be confined to the definition of parents as married, man and woman.

Phase Two of this study will confine itself to the study of select churches identified by the expert panel as churches effectively conducting family ministry. The select churches will further be narrowed to those whose parents, identified in Phase One above, score highest on the research instrument in regard to perspectives and practices in family household discipleship.

Limitations of Generalizations

The quantitative survey of parents will be limited to the scope of the objective responses given by the parents completing the survey. The survey will further be limited by the lack of attitude analysis. Since the survey will be completed by parents, the generalization of the findings will not include the responses of any youth and their perceived effectiveness of the church's efforts or the parent's efforts in the household family discipleship practices.

Without knowing the demographics of the churches to be case studied, it is

possible that the study will also be limiting in nature to only those churches which fit

certain demographics. These limiting demographics may include operating budget, size

of church staff, ratio of staff to members, ratio of adults to youth, and rural or urban

setting. This study will therefore not be generalizable to every congregation in every

setting, but the findings may be transferable or valuable to other congregations, while

they only pertain to churches espousing to perform family ministry as defined by the

literature and the researcher.

Research Instrumentation

The proposed instrumentation for Phase One of this study is the existing on-

line survey, Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey, designed and

validated by Timothy Paul Jones. Jones has determined the Cronbach α to be .88 for the

first eight (8) items on the survey. The remaining eight (8) items on his survey serve as

frequency data only. This instrument will demonstrate the parent's perception of family

discipleship as well as reveal some of the regular practices within the home. The survey

consists, in its current format, of sixteen (16) questions. With the permission of the

survey developer, eight questions will be added to a demographic section of the survey to

be placed at the end of the survey. Questions seventeen (17), eighteen (18), and nineteen

(19) will ask questions regarding the survey-taker's marital status, gender, and age range.

Questions twenty (20), twenty-one (21), and twenty-two (22) will ask specific questions

about the children of the survey-taker. Question twenty-three (23) will ask about the

survey-takers church attendance and question twenty-four (24) will ask the survey-taker

to identify the church where he or she attends. With the permission of the survey

developer, certain questions may be rearranged as to the order in which the questions

appear on the survey.

Phase Two instrumentation will include interviews of all nominated churches. These interviews will either be conducted over the phone, via video, or in person if location permits. The purpose of these interviews will be to gain a greater picture of the efforts to which the church has gone to reach out to parents and explore certain specific functions that the church has undertaken to ensure parents are practicing household family discipleship. It is desired that the interview will be conducted with the primary person involved in the coordination and implementation of the family ministry approach at the specific church as well as the Senior Pastor if this is not the primary person involved in implementation.

In addition to the interviews, the churches whose parents score the highest mean score on the Family Discipleship and Family Practices Survey from each family ministry category will be selected for case study. The case study instrumentation of phase two will include, but not be limited to on-site visits, face-to-face interviews with key pastoral staff, collecting data from the church website, requesting copies of the events calendars, staff handbooks, curriculums, job descriptions, evaluating church documentation, observing a worship service or small group function, and requesting notes from business meetings. On-site visits will enhance the understanding of the daily efforts given to family ministry as well as provide opportunity to evaluate attitude and behavior of the church staff and parents. For follow up purposes, further data may be collected through phone or video interviews conducted as necessary with the key leaders in the church and those involved in the regular implementation of the family ministry objectives. Key individuals will be targeted for the information listed above. These key

individuals, if they exist, include the senior pastor, pre-school minister/director, children's minister/director, youth minister/director, and volunteers such as Sunday school teachers, and other similar positions of service.

Research Procedures

The following paragraphs will outline and describe the process of the proposed research. This mixed methods study will have two phases, with multiple stages within the two phases. Although the phases are sequential, the stages may occur concurrently.

Phase One: Stage One

To begin, an expert panel will be formed and invited to provide a list of churches that they feel are performing family ministry well. The expert panel candidates will be identified through their significant contribution to and identification with one of three specific family ministry models (see Appendix 1). The individual candidates will be asked to participate based on their knowledge and expertise in the field of family ministry and familiarity with churches conducting family ministry. Contact will initially be made by e-mail. The e-mail will be sent requesting their participation in the study explaining that their reply to the email with a list of churches is consent to participate in the study and negative replies are welcome and desired. The e-mail will explain their role in the study, to nominate no more than three churches who in their expert opinion are conducting family ministry well (see Appendix 2). The term family ministry will be defined for the expert panel, although the researcher cannot guarantee adherence to this definition. The panel will not have to convene as a group, although they will be informed of who else is serving on the panel by the inclusion of e-mail addresses in the "to" line of the e-mail message. Permission is granted to contact the others on the panel if they so

desire.

The panel will be given a brief description of the proposed research, as well as a definition of the term "family ministry." They will be asked to submit a list of one (1) to three (3) churches which they feel adhere to the definition provided to them. They will be instructed not to contact any specific congregation to seek such information, but as a member of the expert panel their response should be based upon their own experience with the congregations that they list or the perceived reputation of the church. They will be encouraged to think outside of their own congregation and consider various denominations as well. A deadline will be given to submit the list by e-mail. If requests tarry past the deadline, panel members will be contacted via a second e-mail, phone call, hard copy letter, or any other means necessary to seek their participation.

Phase One: Stage Two

Once the list has been received and duplicate congregations have been reduced to a single line on the list, each congregation will be contacted by phone, e-mail, or any means necessary to seek permission for the parents of their congregation to participate in the on-line survey. It will be highly and heavily communicated that they were selected by experts in the field as a church which stands above others in the field of family ministry. Their participation will not be coerced, but will be highly encouraged to best represent those churches who espouse to perform family ministry.

Once permission is granted by the leadership of the church, the parents will be solicited through bulletin inserts, as well as announcements on the church's website, and other means yet to be determined, all provided by the researcher. If necessary, permission will be sought for individual e-mails and/or hardcopy letters to be mailed to the parents of

the congregation requesting their participation. As a way of limiting the data to only those parents who fit the definition of parent as provided by the researcher as well as those parents of children under the age of eighteen (18) years but greater than the age of eighteen (18) months, the final demographic questions will automatically exclude any responses which do not fit the demographic requirements.

The survey to be used is an existing survey titled, "The Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey." This survey will demonstrate the parent's knowledge and understanding of their roles as primary disciplers in the lives of their children, certain actual practices within the home, and the input or participation of their church in the process. The "Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey" will not be modified, with the exception of adding seven additional demographic questions to serve the purpose of the research with the permission of the survey developer.

Each qualifying household will be encouraged to participate in the online survey twice, one time for each parent. Upon completion of the survey they will have the option of being entered into a drawing for one of three $50.00 gift cards. After a specific deadline has passed or a satisfactory number of responses have been received then the researcher will determine if those responses received represent a fair portion of the population being considered. This will be achieved by comparing the number of responses from each church to the number of families within a given church as identified by the pastor in Phase Two: stage one of the research. The data will be tallied for each church and the results organized sequentially by mean score (highest to lowest) in each specific family ministry model affiliation. The mean score will be determined by those parents taking the Family Discipleship and Family Practices Survey. The top church in

each category will be selected for further case study in the second phase of the research.

Phase Two: Stage One

During Phase One: stage two of the study, the interviews for Phase Two: stage one of the study will commence. Each church will be contacted by e-mail or phone and have explained to them the purpose of the interview, their nomination by an expert panel, and the significance the research means for the furthering of family ministry. At that time an interview will be scheduled with the primary person involved in the implementation of family ministry as well as the senior pastor, if he is not the primary person implementing the family ministry. This data can be collected during Phase One of the study as all churches will be interviewed and the results from Phase One will not influence the data collection of this stage of Phase Two.

Phase Two: Stage Two

The churches in each category selected for the second stage of Phase Two (top mean score for each category) of the study will be contacted by phone, e-mail, letter, or any means necessary. Once contacted, the church leadership will be informed of their selection to participate based upon the performance of those parents who took part in the online survey. They will be asked for further participation in the case study which will involve and entail, but not be limited to, face-to-face and/or phone interviews, on-site visits, collection of documentation such as curriculum, bulletin inserts, planning documentation, organizational charts, staffing and volunteer guidelines, or any other information they feel would be pertinent to the research being conducted on their efforts to train the parents for household family discipleship.

For further clarification on the process of the following research, see Figure 3

below.

Figure 3: Research procedures
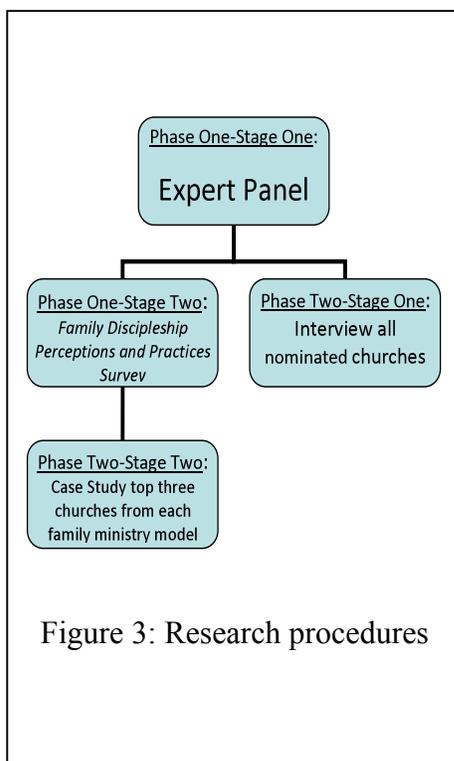
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The proposed research study will seek to explore the best practices for training parents for household family discipleship among churches identified as holding and conducting a family ministry philosophy and approach. This chapter will describe how the data related to this study will be compiled and analyzed. The findings and displays will be addressed in conjunction with the research question to which they pertain. The overall strengths and weaknesses of the methodology will also be addressed.

Compilation Protocol

This research study will collect data in two phases. The first stage of the study will entail assembling an expert panel in the field of family ministry. Nine individuals will be asked to participate on the expert panel based upon their expertise and notoriety in family ministry. Each individual on the expert panel will be asked to provide a list of churches (one to three) which they feel, in their professional opinion, are conducting family ministry well. The panel will not be asked to convene as a group, but will be asked to submit their responses via email. Although the individual panel member is expected to provide their own opinion as an individual representing the field of family ministry, the panel members will not be prevented from contacting each other for discussion of the matter at hand. The individual lists will be compiled into a single list eliminating duplicate submissions. It is anticipated that the panel will provide a list comprising of

between three and twenty-seven churches.

Phase One of the proposed study will utilize the list of churches provided by the expert panel to conduct the quantitative phase of the study. The churches identified by the expert panel will be contacted by phone, e-mail, letter, or any other means necessary and informed of the fact that they were identified by an expert panel for their excellence in philosophy and/or approach to family ministry, and asked to cooperate with and participate in the study. Each church will be guaranteed anonymous reporting with no specific reference to any church or geographic information which may lead an individual to draw conclusions as to the location of the church. This phase of the study will require the church to promote, advertise, and encourage the parents to visit the on-line survey and complete the twenty-four (24) questions, at which time they will be eligible to be entered into a drawing for one of three $50.00 gift cards. The churches will be provided with a scripted announcement to be made during the normal announcement period of the worship services, bulletin inserts, and a link for their church web-site if applicable. If an adequate response is not received within two weeks, the churches will be contacted again and asked for further promotion from the pulpit and possibly email and physical addresses for which to send mailings.

During this first phase of the study, stage one of Phase Two will commence. While the parents are responding to the survey, the individual churches on the list will be contacted and asked to schedule an interview with the individual primarily responsible for the ministry to families as well as the senior pastor, if this is not the primary person. Each church will be guaranteed anonymous reporting with no specific reference to any church or geographic information which may lead an individual to draw conclusions as to

the location of the church. In addition to other interview questions, each church will be asked to identify themselves with one of three specific family ministry models. Definitions of the three models will be provided by the researcher. The model is self identified by congregational leadership based upon definitions provided by the researcher.

Once the data collection period has ended, the data will be analyzed through the survey website and other analytical software. The data will be analyzed to determine which parents are performing a certain set of discipleship practices and the frequency of certain practices. Each parent will be analyzed and data from the same church parents will be congregated to create a combined score for each church. The results of the statistical analysis of this data will be presented in this chapter through the use of tables, lists, and figures, as necessary. This data will be used to identify those churches which have the highest percentage of parents participating in, and leading, household family discipleship practices.

Phase Two of this study, the qualitative phase, will be based upon the data collected in the quantitative stage of Phase One. As each church responds to the family ministry affiliation question in the interview stage (family-based, family-equipping, or family-integrated), they will be placed in the appropriate category. The last question on the parent survey asks the parent to identify the church where they are regular attendees. Based upon the responses here, the parents survey responses will be congregated in the appropriate category provided by the individual churches. The church whose parents have the highest mean score in each category will be selected to participate in a case study to further explore the practices of the church as it pertains to family ministry. In this phase

of the study, the three churches selected for case study will be contacted by phone, e-mail, letter, or any means necessary and asked to participate in the case study.

The case study will include but not be limited to on-site visits, document collection, face-to-face interviews, phone interviews, and researcher observation. The results of this data will be presented in this chapter through the use of tables, lists, and figures, as necessary. The qualitative data collected in this phase of the research will be used to provide a more descriptive summary of the best practices of churches which are reflected in the home of parishioners as identified in the quantitative data.

Demographic and Sample Data

The final eight (8) questions of the twenty-four (24) question survey will be used to identify that the individuals taking the survey are qualified parents as defined by the research. Failure to appropriately answer three of these last seven questions will automatically exclude their results from the survey. The demographic data to be collected in this part of the research will include: (Table 1) marital status and gender of survey participant, (Table 2) age range of parent and age range of children, (Table 3) the total number of children residing in the home and the total number of children grown and out of the home, (Table 4) church attendance trends of parents, and (Table 5) number of respondents per church. A double asterisk indicates a qualifying question.

Table 1: Qualified Parents

Demographic variables	Yes	No
**Married, husband and wife?		
	Male	Female

Gender? Which parent is taking the survey?		

Table 2: Age Range

Question	*18-25 yrs*	*26-35*	*36-45*	*46-55*	*56+*
What is your age range?					
What is the age range of your children? *If only one child, mark the same answer for both.*	*18m-35m*	*3-6yr*	*7-12*	*13-15*	*16-18*
**Youngest child?					
**Oldest child?					

Table 3: Number of Children

Question	0	1-2	3	4	5+
**Number of children currently living at home?					
Number of living children out of the home or older than 18 years of age?					

Table 4: Parents Church Attendance

Question	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4+*
**How many times a month do you attend church?					

Table 5: Family Responses by Church

	# of respondents	*% of total church families*
Church A	28 (*#'s are for example only*)	36%
Church B	15	56%

Church C	238	32%
Church D	56	15%
Church E	42	28%
Church F	33	25%
Church G	673	49%

Total number of churches inventoried will depend upon number of churches nominated by expert panel.

Findings and Displays

The proposed survey questions seek to first of all identify parents' perceptions of household family discipleship as it pertains to their responsibility and actual practice, and secondly, the degree to which the church has been influential in this process. The first sixteen (16) survey questions of the quantitative portion of the study will be used to determine specific practices that the parents use in their household family discipleship approach, the churches involvement in the training process, and the parents perception of their responsibility as the primary disciplers. Certain questions will relate to frequency and procedures. Additional survey questions will relate to practices performed in the home such as prayer, Bible reading, daily devotionals, and songs or worship time.

Secondly, the research questions seek to explore the practices of the church in training parents in the congregation to fulfill this role as primary discipler. Although the quantitative phase will briefly address these questions, it is anticipated that the qualitative phase of the research will prove more effective for data collection in this case. The qualitative questions seek specific measures that the church takes to teach, motivate, inspire, involve, and train the parents, in addition to any way in which the church might

assess the effectiveness of their efforts with the parents.

Research Question 1: Household Discipleship Perceptions

In response to the first proposed research question, the researcher will

categorize the perceptions (Table 6) of the parents as well as the specific practices in the

home (Table 7) based upon the individual responses to the questions on the Family

Perspectives and Practices survey.

Table 6: Parental Perceptions

Perceptions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.						
2. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.						
3. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.						
4. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.						
5. I want to do whatever it takes for						

my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.						
6. Parents-and particularly fathers-have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.						
7. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the Gospel with others.						
8. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.						

Table 7: Parental Practices

Practice	Never	Once	A couple times	3 to 4 times	5 or 6 times	7 or more times
9. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past WEEK have I prayed aloud with any of my children?						
10. How many times in the past WEEK has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned OFF?						
11. How many times in the past MONTH have I read or discussed						

the Bible with any of my children?					
12. How many times in the past MONTH have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?					
13. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?					
14. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?					
15. How many times in the past YEAR have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?					
16. How often in the past YEAR has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual growth?					

The responses from Table 6 will be given a numeric value based upon which

polar end of the Likert-type scale the response falls. For some of the questions the

strongly disagree polar end will score a six (6) while other questions, the *strongly agree*

polar end will score a six (6). The two categories of the Likert-type scales will be

summed and the respondents ranked by church. The responses from Table 7 will be given

numeric values as follows: never-1, once-2, a couple times-3, three to four times-4, five

to six times-5, and seven or more times-6. These scores will also be averaged by church

and churches ranked based up the final mean of all scores from Tables 6 and 7.

With the data from Table 6 and 7 determining the position of each church

within the three family ministry categories, the researcher will be able to establish the church in each category whose parents properly perceive and actively practice household family discipleship practices. Once this data has been compiled, the researcher will then be able to determine the churches which have the highest percentage of parents participating in household family discipleship, and order the churches in descending order (Table 8).

The significance of the data collected in Table 7 is to demonstrate which churches have the highest participation and greatest perception among the parents in household family discipleship practices.

Table 8: Parents Performance by Church

Rank	Family-Based	Family-Equipping	Family-Integrated
#1	Church A	Church B	Church C
#2	Church D	Church E	Church F
#3	Church G	N/A	Church H
#4	Church I	N/A	Church J
#5	N/A	N/A	Church K
#6	N/A	N/A	Church L

Total number of churches inventoried will depend upon number of churches nominated by expert panel.

Summary of Research Question 1 Findings

This section will summarize the findings of the research regarding the parents' perceptions and practices based upon the results of the survey. Particular attention will be

given to the correlation between the number of parents who perceive discipleship to be a part of their role and the actual practices being performed in the home. In addition to reporting the above, Table 9 below will report the relationship between the perception and practices of the individuals.

Table 9: Perception vs. Practices

# of parents reporting	% of parents who perceive responsibility	% of parents who practice household FD	Variance
N	N%	N%	

Research Question 2: The Church's Teaching

As much of church culture can be subconscious and individual members can be unaware of the church either directly or indirectly performing certain functions, the instrumentation will attempt to identify parents understanding of the churches role as well as their performance. In response to the second proposed question, the researcher will show in Table 10 the parental awareness of the church's role. Table 11 will demonstrate the parents understanding of actual involvement by the church in the life of the family.

Table 10: Parental Awareness of Church Responsibility

Question	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Somewhat disagree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
17. My Church provides opportunity for my child to develop meaningful relationships with older adults.						

18. The primary people who influence my child's spiritual growth are the ministers and other church leaders.						
3. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.						

Table 11: Parental Perceptions of Church Provisions

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Ministers or other church leaders are the people primarily responsible for showing my children how to share the Gospel with others.						
20. A minister, elder, or other church leader has helped me to develop a clear plan for my children's spiritual growth.						
	Never	Once	A couple times	3 to 4 times	5 or 6 times	7 or more times
30. How often in the past YEAR has any elder, minister, or other church leader made contact with me about one or more of my						

children's spiritual growth?						

Research question two will also benefit from the interview stage of the research. During the interview stage each church will have an opportunity to share and extrapolate upon specific strategies and functions that the typical church member may be unaware of, or oblivious to. The interview questions will seek to uncover specific strategies that the church implements in order to positively influence the parents in their roles as disciplers. The interview will further explore those practices which the church expresses as unique and effective within their own context. The research will seek to uncover direct as well as indirect instruction and strategies that would contribute to the research.

The data collected in question two will explore the church's role in the practices that the parents are conducting at home. By considering this data, the researcher will be able to identify if the parents were influenced by the church in general or if they were responsible parties on their own.

Summary of Research Question 2 Findings

This section will summarize the data collected regarding the churches function and role in training parents for their task as primary disciplers. A small portion of this data will be drawn from the survey instrument, while the majority of this data will be collected through the phone or video interviews conducted with each church. The significance of this data will be used to demonstrate whether or not the church is playing a role in the training process, and possibly demonstrate if some parents disciple regardless of the churches efforts.

Research Question 3: Train and Support

The qualitative data collected in this part of the study will explore the specific functions of the church in the training of the parents. The data will be collected individually from each church, and therefore, may vary from church to church. It is expected that each church will submit certain documentation to support what they do as a church body. This may include a specific curriculum that is in place for Sunday school classes for parents, books that are given to parents dedicating their babies, or a detailed plan that teaches parents what to expect out of parenthood and how to biblically respond. Through face-to-face interviews, the researcher may discover that certain churches place a higher significance on the role of parents than others do. It may also become clear that the pastor takes an active role of promoting family discipleship in some congregations, while he remains more passive in others.

Although it seems necessary for the foundation of such an effective family ministry approach to come from the pulpit, the researcher may discover that the majority of the support comes from a group of lay leaders. Additionally, some congregations may formulate their family ministry approach through congregational activities, while others do so through strict teaching, and others by means of cell group accountability. The desired outcome of the research is a fairly concise list of overarching themes and practices which the churches are consistently performing in their congregations.

Summary of Research Question 3 Findings

This section will summarize the data collected through the phone and Video interviews as well as the case studies. Particular attention will be given to the practices that the churches perform, and look for any themes or consistency between the

congregations.

Research Question 4: Assessment of Effectiveness

The final portion of the qualitative phase of the research will seek to understand if the church, in any way, assesses its effectiveness with the parents. Does the church simply relay the information and hope that the parents are performing household family discipleship practices, or does the pastor, staff, or congregation in some way seek to know the lengths to which their efforts are going.

It is possible that the research will demonstrate that some congregations are not assessed for effectiveness at all, while others are not just assessed for effectiveness but are assessed by means of accountability and pastoral staff home visits. If the church does assess their effectiveness, in what ways do they do so, and in what ways does the church reform their approach when necessary? Additional data that may be realized is in what ways has previous assessment guided the current principles and practices of the congregation in the training of parents for household family discipleship?

Summary of Research Question 4 Findings

This section will further summarize the data collected from the phone or video interviews and the case studies. This data will focus not so much on what churches do to train, but once the church has provided the training what measures do the churches take to assess their effectiveness. If the church has established any form of accountability system, a mentorship program, a multiplication approach, or any other form to consistently monitor and grow the parents in the congregation, it will be explored here.

Evaluation of the Research Design

It is a difficult task to evaluate the specific strengths and weaknesses of the research design before the research has been conducted. There are, however, some obvious strengths and weaknesses that inherently exist in almost any research project of this magnitude.

Strengths of the Research Design

A primary strength of the design is the ability of the researcher to be presented with a narrow list of churches which are conducting family ministry well. The use of an expert panel quickly eliminates any church that may not espouse a family ministry approach, or at least not an approach to family ministry as defined by the researcher. This process also allows for an objective suggestion by the expert panel to then be analyzed and verified through quantitative methods.

The use of "parents" within the congregation will strengthen the research above and beyond than if all members of the congregation were to participate. The perceptions of parents within the congregation may differ from the perceptions of those who are not currently parents. The quantitative measures used will allow the parents to fairly and accurately evaluate the performance of their own church while possibly not even realizing they are evaluating the churches efforts. The quantitative phase will also allow the researcher to more accurately develop the measures for the qualitative phase of the research.

By exploring the best practices of the churches identified by the expert panel, the research is more than likely to demonstrate that there are specific practices which churches are doing in order to train their parents for household family discipleship. By

exploring the various practices from congregation to congregation, the researcher will hopefully be able to identify specific demographic differences which may or may not influence the practices of the congregations.

Weaknesses of the Research Design

A primary weakness in the design is the possibility of certain churches being excluded from the research due to an oversight on the panel's part, or the lack of exposure as a church espousing family ministry. This is not to suggest that the research will be weakened, but rather that the research could have been strengthened further. A similar weakness can be found in the use of an expert panel whose members may or may not hold denominational bias or preferential treatment to churches they are more familiar with.

A weakness in the quantitative phase of the study is that the attitudes of the parents cannot be measured. Although parents may perform certain household family discipleship practices on a regular basis, their attitude towards performing such practices will not be measured in the quantitative phase of the research. The same concern could be raised in regard to the children and youth of the families. What is the attitude of the recipients of the household practices? Along this same line of reasoning is the concern or impact of parental modeling and the value which it holds in the eyes of the children. Even though the parents may not be practicing household family discipleship, a parent may be a better model of the Christian life than a parent who is loyally practicing household family discipleship. A sexual abuser, alcoholic, and so on may be practicing household family discipleship, but the other factors of their life are not being considered.

A final weakness to note in the qualitative phase of the research is the inability

of the researcher to experience the training of any particular church as it regards the best practices. The research would be much stronger if time allowed for the full immersion of the researcher into the culture of the church to experience firsthand the practices of the church with the families in regards to the training of the saints.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This proposed study will explore the best practices of churches which have adequately trained the parents of the congregation to perform household family discipleship. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the potential significance of the findings, as well as the implications, for the research. Additionally, the applications of the proposed research, as well as its limitations, will be considered.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this two-phase sequential mixed methods study will be to explore the best practices for training parents to pursue household family discipleship among churches identified as holding and conducting a family ministry philosophy and approach. This research will use quantitative methods to measure the parent's perception and practices, and qualitative methods to explore the best practices of the churches.

Research Questions

The following questions will direct the collection and analysis of the data for the proposed research study.

1. To what degree, and in what ways, do parents perceive and practice family discipleship as a household parental responsibility?

2. In what ways have churches taught parents their responsibility to disciple their own children?

3. In what ways do churches train and support parents in the congregation to fulfill their role as primary disciplers?

4. In what ways do churches assess the effectiveness of training parents to disciple their children?

Research Implications

A basic assumption that this research will function under is that those churches which are identified as being elite family ministry churches are in some way training the parents in the congregation. A logical deduction, then, is that through the training by the churches, the parents are then, in turn, performing certain disciplines, developing certain traits, or establishing certain patterns within their own home in order to disciple their children on a regular basis. The overarching question has not been so much what are the parents doing, but more so, what are churches doing, and how is that reflected in the home?

The implications of this research for the contemporary church, as well as for the precedent literature, are to establish a foundation of what appears to be the best practices. Much of the precedent literature has made claims that there is a way to do family discipleship. This research will, hopefully, draw the precedent literature together in order to demonstrate how the church can biblically and effectively train parents to provide household family discipleship.

For some of the scholars and authors who have contributed to the literature, a basic shift in pragmatics will be in order. As the research will hopefully demonstrate, some scholars and authors who believe they are promoting and performing family discipleship, in fact, are not. This is not to say that their intentions have been deceitful nor have their efforts been without merit. But uninformed, the scholars and authors proceeded to establish change to an already impaired system without asking the questions of, "What works?" and "What is biblical?"

It is anticipated, then, that the research will establish a core group of best practices that churches are conducting with their congregations on a regular basis. These best practices, it is anticipated, will be reflected in the home as the parents perform household family discipleship.

Research Applications

The application that will result from the establishment of a core group of best practices will be realized when more and more churches incorporate the practices into their own congregation. The application of the research might find its way into seminary classes, as well as pastor's conferences, all in an effort to promote household family discipleship. Further application will be drawn from the implications of the research at the conclusion of the study.

Research Limitations

In the quantitative phase of the study, research will be limited by the objective responses provided by the parents. Additionally, the research will be limited in that the respondents' attitude will not be analyzed. Since the survey will be completed by parents, the generalization of the findings will not include the responses of any of the youth or their perceived effectiveness of the churches efforts or the parent's efforts in the household family discipleship practices. A final limitation is that the research will only explore the parents of those churches identified by the expert panel as churches espousing an effective family ministry approach.

In the qualitative phase of the study, the research will also be limited to those churches which have been identified by the expert panel as a church espousing an effective family ministry approach. The qualitative research will further be limited by the

observations of the researcher as it pertains to the documents reviewed, interviews

conducted, and any observable church culture dynamics. This research will not provide a

longitudinal observation of the process of training or embedding in the culture of the

church.

Further Research

Considerations for further research include performing a longitudinal study to

more closely examine the extended process of training which a church regularly performs

with the families as the children travel through the life-span. Additionally, the research

may benefit from studying the youth of these families to examine the effectiveness of the

training and the practices being performed in the home. Are the practices proving

effective for multi-generational faithfulness?

A possible question that may be raised as a result of this research is how a

church might transform its culture to develop the best practices within a current, possibly

turbulent, church culture. Further research in the steps necessary to establish these

practices or case studies of churches which have established these practices through

transforming a congregation may be beneficial to the general church community seeking

to implement these best practices in their own congregations.

APPENDIX 1

EXPERT PANEL

1. Wesley Black

2. Henry Reyenga

3. Brian Haynes

4. Richard Ross

5. Scott Brown

6. Jay Strother

7. Brandon Shields

8. Eric Wallace

9. Steve Wright

APPENDIX 2

EXPERT PANEL E-MAIL REQUEST

Dear friend in the faith.

My name is W. Ryan Steenburg. I am a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. I am currently pursuing research that focuses on family ministry in the local church. You have been identified as an individual with expertise in the area of family ministry. I am writing to request your participation in the study simply by supplying a list of at least one (1) and no more than three (3) churches which you feel are conducting family ministry based upon the definition below. Please think outside of your own congregation and denomination as well. I will consider your reply to this email with a list of church(es) as consent to participate, and you will receive nominal credit for your participation. Anonymity will be granted to those individuals requesting it in the reply email. I am not asking you to contact any of these churches nor to do any research on your own to discover these churches. All I ask is that based upon your expertise which one (1) to three (3) churches come to your mind as churches conducting family ministry as it is reflected in the definition below. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please reply by November 3, 2010. Negative replies are welcome and desired.

By His Grace & For His Glory,

W. Ryan Steenburg

Family Ministry: The process of intentionally and persistently aligning a congregation's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children (adapted from Jones 2009, 40).

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. The researcher will contact the churches by phone requesting a scheduled interview with the senior pastor and the individual primarily in charge of implementing family ministry if other than the senior pastor.

2. When the researcher calls on the scheduled day and time, the researcher will introduce himself and attempt to build some rapport and establish trust.

3. The researcher will explain the purpose of the research as well as how this specific church was nominated.

4. The researcher will reassure the interviewees of personal as well as church anonymity. The researcher will guarantee that every effort will be taken in order to ensure that no regional or geographical data is shared throughout the reporting of the findings.

5. The researcher will inform the interview participants that for the sake of the research, the interview will be tape recorded.

6. The researcher will proceed with the interview questions, pending the interviewees have no questions or concerns.

7. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher will thank the interviewees for their time and assistance.

APPENDIX 4

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following interview questions will serve as a guide for the interviews.

These questions will not necessarily be the precise questions asked, neither is there any

guarantee that all questions listed here will be included in the interview process. These

questions will serve as the primary questions will possible follow-up questions.

1. Based upon the following definitions, what model of family ministry does your church identify with the most?
   a. Family-Based: "Family-based churches retain separate, age-segmented ministry structures. …family based churches intentionally include intergenerational and family-focused events in each ministry" (Shields 2009, 100).
   b. Family-Equipping: "Family-equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children" (Strother 2009, 144).
   c. Family-Integrated: "The [family-integrated] church eliminates age-segregated programs and events. All or nearly all programs and events are multigenerational, with a strong focus on parents' responsibility to evangelize and to disciple their own children" (Jones 2009, 52).

2. What, if any, steps has the church leadership taken to train the parents of the congregation to perform household family discipleship?

3. What, if any, events or programs are utilized to champion the parents in their role as disciple-makers?

4. What, if any, measures are taken to ensure that parents are discipling their children at home?

5. How often does the pastor preach on or exhort parents to train their children in the Lord from the pulpit?

6. How often does someone from your church leadership make a home visit to encourage, support, and observe specific families?

7. What Sunday School curriculum do you use with your children, youth, and parents?

8. How does your church celebrate or recognize the various spiritual and physical progress in the youth and children?

9. Do you have a children's worship hour?

10. Are the parents given the option to keep their children in the sanctuary with them during the sermon?

11. How often, if ever, does the church host a function intended to bring families together?

12. Describe these functions.

13. What is unique about your congregation?

14. How many families do you have on your membership roles?

15. Upon what do you base that number?

16. How many of those families attend no more than two times a month?

17. What, if any, is your annual budget for family ministry functions?

18. What is your estimated attendance for Sunday morning worship?

19. Of that estimate, what number would you say are parents who attend church at least twice a month?

20. And what number would you say are single adults?

APPENDIX 5

INSTRUMENTATION

Below is the "Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey" with additional demographic questions added.

"The research in which you are about to participate is designed to explore parents perceptions of parental roles as primary disciplers, and the actual practices of parents. This research is being conducted by W. Ryan Steenburg for the purpose of dissertation research. In this research, you will be asked to answer 24 total questions, one of which is identifying the church where you attend. Any information you provide will be held *strictly* confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this on-line survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research."

Perceptions	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
1. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.						
2. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right						

now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.						
3. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.						
4. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.						
5. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.						
6. Parents-and particularly fathers-have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.						
7. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the Gospel with others.						
8. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.						
Practice	*Never*	*Once*	*A couple times*	*3 to 4 times*	*5 or 6 times*	*7 or more times*

9. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past WEEK have I prayed aloud with any of my children?					
10. How many times in the past WEEK has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned OFF?					
11. How many times in the past MONTH have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?					
12. How many times in the past MONTH have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?					
13. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?					
14. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?					
15. How many times in the past YEAR have I intentionally participated with one or more of my					

children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?					
16. How often in the past YEAR has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual growth?					

Double asterisk (**) indicates a qualifying question.

Demographic Questions	Yes	No
17. **Married, husband and wife?		
	Male	Female
18. Gender? Which parent is taking the survey?		

Question	18-25 yrs	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
19. What is your age range?					
20. What is the age range of your children?	18m-35m	3-6yr	7-12	13-15	16-18
**Youngest Child					
**Oldest Child					
Question	0	1-2	3	4	5+
21. **Number of children currently living at home?					
22. Number of living children out of the home or older than 18 years of age?					

Question	0	1	2	3	4+
23. **How many times a month do you attend church?					

Church Affiliation	Church Name	5 digit zip code
24. Name and zip code of where you attend church?		

APPENDIX 6

LETTER OF PERMISSION

Please see the attached letter of permission from the survey developer.

(Letter goes here: 5th and Broadway has lost this letter in the mail)

REFERENCE LIST

Allen, Clifton J., ed. 1971a. *The Broadman Bible commentary*, Vol. 5, *Proverbs - Isaiah*. By Marvin E. Tate, Jr. Nashville: Broadman Press.

_____. 1971b. *The Broadman Bible commentary*, Vol. 11, *2 Corinthians - Philemon*. By Ralph P. Martin. Nashville: Broadman Press.

Alliance For Church And Family Reformation. 2009. Alliance for Church and Family Reformation. 2009. http.//www.gracefamilybaptist.net/GFBC_/Alliance.html. (accessed February 27, 2009).

Archer, Gleason L. 1994. *A survey of Old Testament introduction*. Chicago: Moody Press.

Arcus, Margaret E., Jay Schvaneveldt, and Joel Moss. 3. The nature of family life education. In *Handbook of family life education. Foundations of family*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Arnett, Jeffrey Jensen. 1999. Adolescent storm and stress, reconsidered. *American Psychologist* 54, no. 5 (May). 317-326. http.//www.jeffreyarnett.com/articles/Arnett_1999_AmPsy/ (accessed January 5, 2009).

Astley, Jeff. 1996. The role of the family in the formation and criticism of faith. In *The family in theological perspective*, ed. Stephen C. Barton, 199. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Barker, Kenneth L., John R. Kohlenberger, ed. 1994. *Zondervan NIV Bible commentary*, Vol. 1, *Old Testament*. By Earl S. Kalland. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Barna, George. 2001. *Real teens*. Ventura, CA: Regal.

Baron, Don. Intergenerational cells. *The Lutheran church Missouri synod*. www.lcms.org/ca/dcs/family/Content%5Cdoc_articles%5C543.doc/ (accessed February 26,2009).

Barton, Stephen C. 2001. *Life together*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Baucham, Voddie. 2007. *Family driven faith*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Beers, V. Gilbert. 1996. Nurturing children at home. In *The Christian educator's handbook on family life education*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel, James Wilhoit, 119.

Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Black, Wesley, and Sandra Black. 1985. *Discipleship in the home*. Nashville: Convention Press.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1963. *The cost of discipleship*. Trans. R.H Fuller. New York: Collier Books.

Briggs, Phil, and Wes Black. 2005. Impacting teenagers at home. In *Transforming student ministry*, ed. Richard Ross, 92. Nashville: Lifeway Press.

Burns, Jim, and Mark DeVries. 2003. *Partnering with parents in youth ministry*. Ventura: Regal.

Bushnell, Horace. 1867. *Christian nurture*. New York: Charles Scribner & Co.

Chrysostom, St. John. 1986. *On marriage and family life*. Trans. Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson. Crestwood, NJ: St Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Clark, Francis E. 1903. *The Christian endeavor manual*. Norwood, MA: Plimton Press.

Clendenen, E. Ray, ed. 1993. *The new American commentary*. Vol. 14, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, by Duane A. Garrett. Nashville: Broadman Press.

Dever, Mark, and Paul Alexander. 2005. *The deliberate church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

DeVries, Mark. 2001. Focusing youth ministry through the family. In *Starting right*, ed. Kenda Casey Dean, Chap Clark, and Dave Rahn, 151. El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties Academic.

_____. 2004. *Family-based youth ministry*. Downers Grove: IVP.

Drescher, John M. 1997. *Parents-passing the torch of faith*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press.

Driver, Samuel Rolles, Alfred Plummer, Charles Augustus Briggs, ed. 1979. *The international critical commentary*. *The epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*. By T.K. Abbott. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd.

Duckert, Mary. 1976. *Intergenerational experiences in church education*. Philadelphia: Geneva Press.

Dumbrell, William J. 2002. *The faith of Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Duncan, Stephen F., and H. Wallace Goddard. 2005. *Family life education: Principles and practices for effective outreach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dunn, Richard R. 2001. *Shaping the spiritual life of students*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Fraze, David. 2008. Theological principles behind intergenerational youth ministry: It's not rocket science. *Fuller youth institute*, November 3, 2008. http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/2008/11/theological-principles-behind-intergenerational-youth-ministry// (accessed February 26, 2009).

Freudenburg, Ben, and Rick Lawrence. 1998. *The family-friendly church*. Loveland, CO: Vital Ministry.

Granqvist, Pehr, and Jane R. Dickie. 2006. Attachment and spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. In *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*, eds. Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Pamela Ebstyne King, Linda Wagener, and Peter Benson, 202. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hammett, John S. 2007. Human nature. In *A theology for the church*, ed. Daniel Akin, 355-356. Nashville: B&H.

Harrison, R.K., Robert L. Hubbard Jr., ed. 1976. *The new international commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 5, *The book of Deuteronomy*. By Peter C. Craigie. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

_____. 2005. *The new international commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 17, *The book of Proverbs chapters 15 - 31*. By Bruce K. Waltke. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Hauk, Gary H. 1988. *Family enrichment in your church*. Nashville: Convention Press.

Haynes, Brian. 2009. *Shift*. Loveland, CO: Group.

Hershberger, Michele. 2007. Intergenerational ministry and Bible teaching emerge as youth ministry council issues. *Hesston College*, June 19, 2007. http://www.hesston.edu/NEWSPORT/archives/spring2007/070619ymc.htm. (accessed February 26, 2009).

Holmes, Michael, ed. 1999. *The apostolic fathers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Hubbard, David A., Glenn W. Barker, ed. 1990. *Word biblical commentary*, Vol. 42, *Ephesians*. By Andrew T. Lincoln. Dallas: Word Books, Publisher.

Jones, Timothy Paul, ed. 2009. *Perspectives on family ministry: 3 views*. Nashville: B&H Academic.

Jones, Timothy Paul. 2010. Models for family ministry. In *A theology for family ministry*, ed. Michael Anthony, and Michelle Anthony. Nashville: B&H Academic.

Jones, Timothy Paul. 2011. *The family ministry field guide*. Unpublished manuscript. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House.

Keck, Leander E., ed. 1998. *The new interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 2, *Numbers 1 & 2 Samuel*. By Ronald E. Clements. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

_____. 2000. *The new interpreter's Bible*, Vol. XI, *2 Corinthians - Philemon*. By Pheme Perkins. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Kehrwald, Leif. 2006. *Families and faith*. New London, CT: 23rd Publications.

King, Mike. 2006. *Presence-centered youth ministry.* Downers Grove: IVP Books.

Land, Richard, and Barrett Duke. 1999. Fatherhood in the evangelical tradition. In *The faith factor in fatherhood*, ed. Don Eberly. Lanham: Lexington Books.

LifeWay Research. 2007. LifeWay research uncovers reasons 18 to 22 year olds drop out of church. *Lifeway*. http.//www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0%2C1703%2CA%25253D165949 %252526M%25253D200906%2C00.html. (accessed March 1, 2009).

Longman III, Tremper, David E. Garland, ed. 2006. *The expositor's Bible commentary revised edition*, Vol. 12, *Ephesians - Philemon*. By William W. Klein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

McCready, William C. 1985. The three ages of the family. In *The family today and tomorrow*. Braintree, MA: The Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research and Education Center.

McDowell, Josh. 2006. *The last Christian generation*. Holiday, FL: Green Key Books.

Metzger, Bruce M., David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, ed. 2001. *Word biblical commentary*, Vol. 6A, *Deuteronomy 1.1-21.9, revised*. By Duane L. Christensen. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Muck, Terry, ed. 2003. *The NIV application commentary*, *Proverbs*. By Paul E. Koptak. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Nasaw, David. 1979. *Schooled to order*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nash, R. Scott, ed. 2003. *Smyth and Helwys Bible commentary*, Vol. 5, *Deuteronomy*. By Mark E. Biddle. Macon: Smyth & Helwys.

Nelson, Bryan, with Timothy Paul Jones. 2011. Why family ministry matters. In *Trained in the fear of God*, ed. Randy Stinson, and Timothy Paul Jones. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic.

Newman, Jay. 2001. *Biblical religion and family values*. Westport: Praeger.

_____, and John Perry. 2002. *For faith & family*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

Pinckney, T.C. 2001. We are losing our children. *Alliance for the separation of school and state*, September 18, 2001. http.//www.schoolandstate.org/SBC/Pinckney-

WeAreLosingOurChildren.htm. (accessed March 8, 2010).

Plummer, Robert L. 2011. "Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord: Family discipleship among the first Christians," in *Trained in the fear of God*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Powlison, David. 2001. Questions at the crossroads. The care of souls and modern psychotherapy. In *Care for the soul*, ed. Mark R. McMinn, and Timothy R. Phillips, 34. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Pringle, William, trans. 1996. *Calvin's commentaries*, Vol. 21, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*. By John Calvin. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Rainey, Dennis. 2002. Local church family ministry in the new millennium. In *Building strong families*, ed. Dennis Rainey, 15. Wheaton: Crossway Books.

Reuther, Rosemary Radford. 2000. *Christianity and the making of the modern family*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Sailhamer, John. 1990. *The expositor's Bible commentary*. Ed. Frank E. Gaebelein. *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Sell, Charles M. 1995. *Family Ministry*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Senter, Mark, III. 1992. *The coming revolution in youth ministry*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Shields, Brandon. 2009. Family-based ministry. Separated contexts, shared focus. In *Perspectives on family ministry*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones. Nashville: B&H.

Smith, Christian, and Melinda Lundquist Denton. 2005. *Soul searching. The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Staples, Ethlyne Babcock, and Edward Daniel Staples. 1948. *Children in a Christian home*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

Steenburg, W. Ryan, with Timothy Paul Jones. 2010. Growing gaps from generation to generation. Family discipleship in the 19th and 20th centuries. In *Trained in the Fear of God*, eds. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic.

Strother, Jay. 2009. Family-equipping ministry: Church and home as co-champions. In *Perspectives on family ministry*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones. Nashville: B&H.

Stuart, Douglas. 1980. *Old Testament Exegesis*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Thatcher, Adrian. 2007. *Theology and families*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

The Barna Group. 2006. Most twentysomethings put Christianity on the shelf following spiritually active teen years. *The Barna group*, September 11, 2006. http.//www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdateNarrowPreview&BarnaUpdateID=245/ (accessed March 1, 2009).

The national center for family-integrated churches. 2009a. Questions about the national center for family integrated churches. http.//www.ncfic.org/FAQ/ (accessed February 27, 2009).

_____. 2009b. The mission of the national center for family integrated churches. http.//www.ncfic.org/Mission_Statement/ (accessed February 27, 2009).

_____. 2009c. A biblical confession for uniting church and family. http.//www.ncfic.org/confession/ (accessed February 27, 2009).

_____. 2009d. About the board. http.//www.ncfic.org/about_the_board/ (accessed February 27, 2009).

Thomas, Jane, Jay Schvaneveldt, and Margaret Young. 1993. Programs in family life education: Development, implementation, and evaluation. In *Handbook of family life education. Foundations of family life education*, 109. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tripp, Paul David. 1997. *Age of opportunity*. Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing.

Verhulst, Kristen. 2009. Calvin institute of Christian worship. *Calvin institute of Christian worship*, January 9, 2009. http.//www.calvin.edu/worship/events/highlight/intergeneration.php/ (accessed February 26, 2009).

Wallace, Eric. 2003. *Uniting church and home*. Lorton, VA: Solutions for Integrating Church and Home.

White, James W. 1988. *Intergenerational religious education*. Birmingham: Religious Education Press.

White, Joe, and Jim Weidmann, comps. 2001. *Parents guide to the spiritual mentoring of teens*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Wright, Steve, and Chris Graves. 2007. *ReThink*. Wake Forest, NC: InQuest Publishing.

_____. 2008. *Apparent privilege*. Wake Forest, NC: InQuest Publishing.

Wuthnow, Robert. 2007. *After the baby boomers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Yaconelli, Mark. 2006. *Contemplative youth ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Zahn, Drew. 2002. Connecting the generations. *Leadership* 23, no. 2 (Spring). 37-42.

Zerwick, Max. 1993. *A grammatical analysis of the Greek New Testament*. Trans. Mary

Grosvenor. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.

ABSTRACT

CHURCH AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF
FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

Wesley Ryan Steenburg, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011
Supervisor: Dr. Timothy Paul Jones

The efforts to revive and reorganize the approach to youth and family ministry are commendable, but in and of themselves are not proving to be effective. In 2002, Dennis Rainey, executive director of FamilyLife, wrote, "No church, community, or nation will rise higher than the spiritual condition of its families" (Rainey 2002, 15). A primary concern for family discipleship raised by scholars and theologians is that the family has failed to rise to the obligation of passing the torch of faithfulness from one generation to the next. Stephen Barton concurs that the Christian family, especially, has been under attack and a victim of certain outcomes due to social trends, the women's movement, science, medicine, and the political movement (Barton 2001, 5-8). The failure of the family has not been a source of the decline of family discipleship, but, rather, it has been a result of the decline of family discipleship.

This two phase sequential mixed methods study explores the best practices for training parents for household family discipleship among churches identified as holding, and conducting, a family ministry approach. The first phase of this study will quantitatively survey parents to determine the practices and perceptions within the home. The second phase of this study will qualitatively explore the practices and customs of the

identified churches to better understand which practices may or may not be most

effective in training parents for household family discipleship.

VITAE

Wesley Ryan Steenburg

PERSONAL

Born: December 14, 1976, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Married: Kristen Joy Trudel, December 13, 2003
Children: Caitlyn Rose, Wesley Ryan, Anabelle Grace

EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2001
M.Div., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008

MINISTERIAL

Chaplain, Army National Guard, 2007 – present
Sunday School Director, First Baptist Church of Prospect, Prospect, Kentucky,
          2009 – present

ACADEMIC

Instructor, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010 – present
Garrett Fellow, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009 – present
Associate Editor, The Journal of Family Ministry, 2009 – present

PUBLICATIONS

W. Ryan Steenburg with Timothy Paul Jones. 2010. Growing gaps from
generation to generation: Family discipleship in the 19th and 20th centuries. In
Trained in the Fear of God, eds. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones. Grand
Rapids: Kregel Academic.

Timothy Paul Jones with W. Ryan Steenburg. 2011. Family-equipping transition
#4: Synchronize. In *The family ministry field guide*. Indianapolis: Wesleyan.

W. Ryan Steenburg and Lilly Park. 2010. *Four views of the end times: Leader's
guide*. Torrance, CA: Rose.